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Number 85
August 1991
47209

**100 Games Rated!**

Space Quest IV ● Harpoon Tactics ● Medieval Lords

# COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

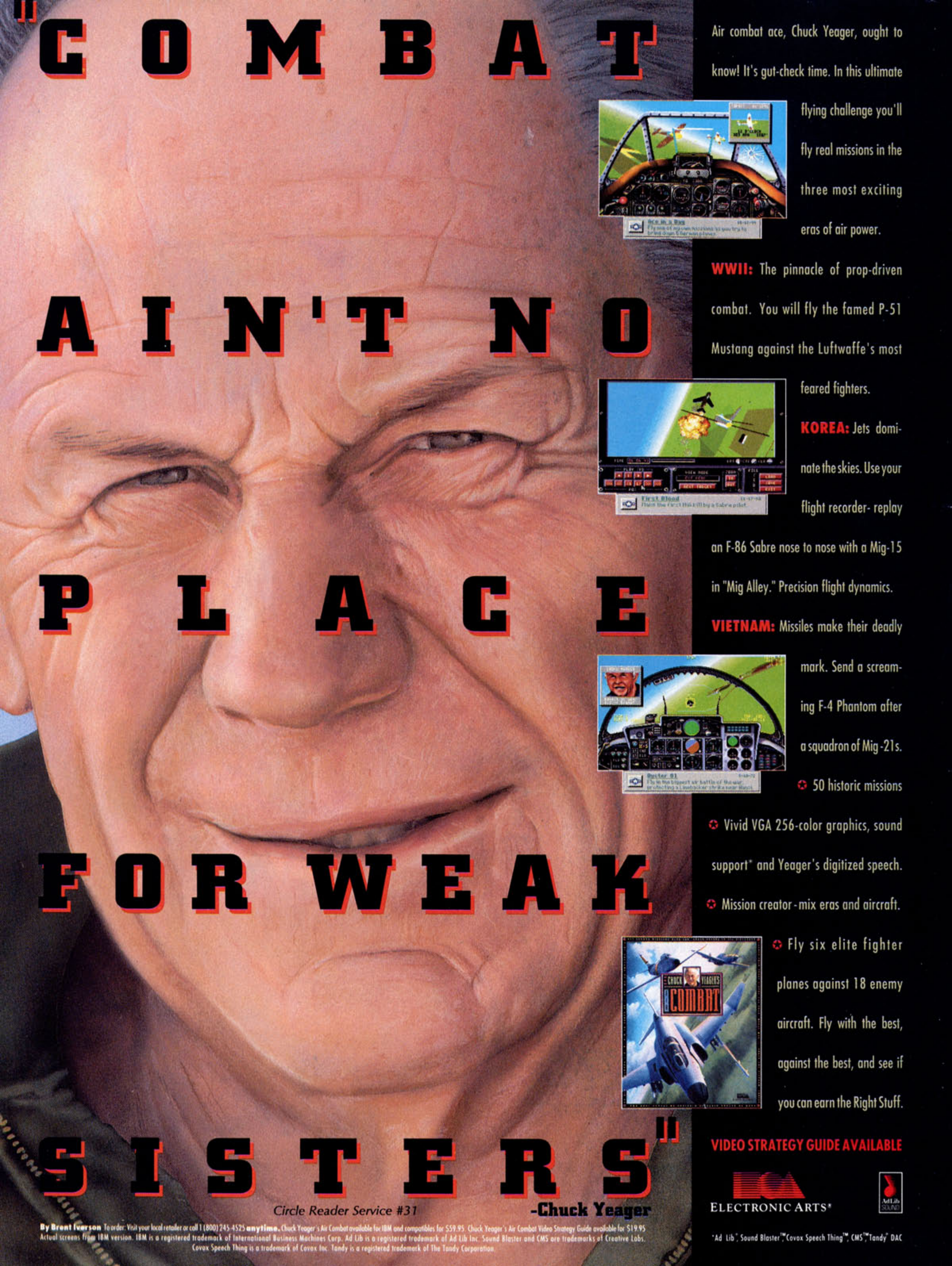
*The Definitive Computer Game Magazine*



## Electronic Arts' *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*

**Also in This Issue:**
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**On-Line AD&D: Neverwinter Nights**
**Hot New Trends and Games from CES**

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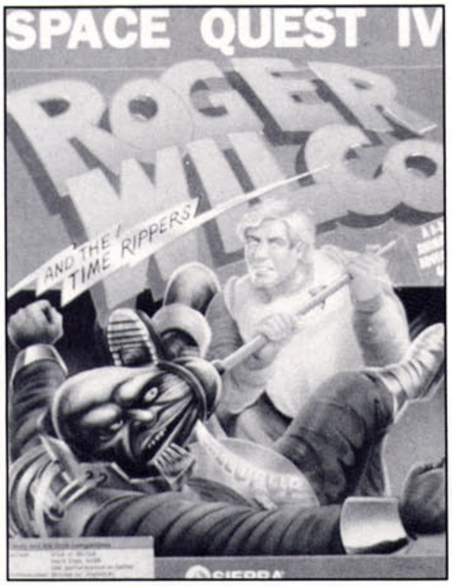

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Fly six elite fighter planes against 18 enemy aircraft. Fly with the best, against the best, and see if you can earn the Right Stuff.
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# COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

**Covering the World of Computer Games for Ten Years**

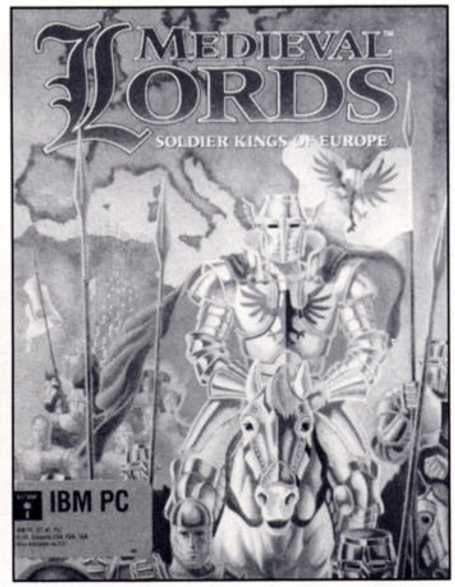
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**Yeager's Air Combat / pg 16**

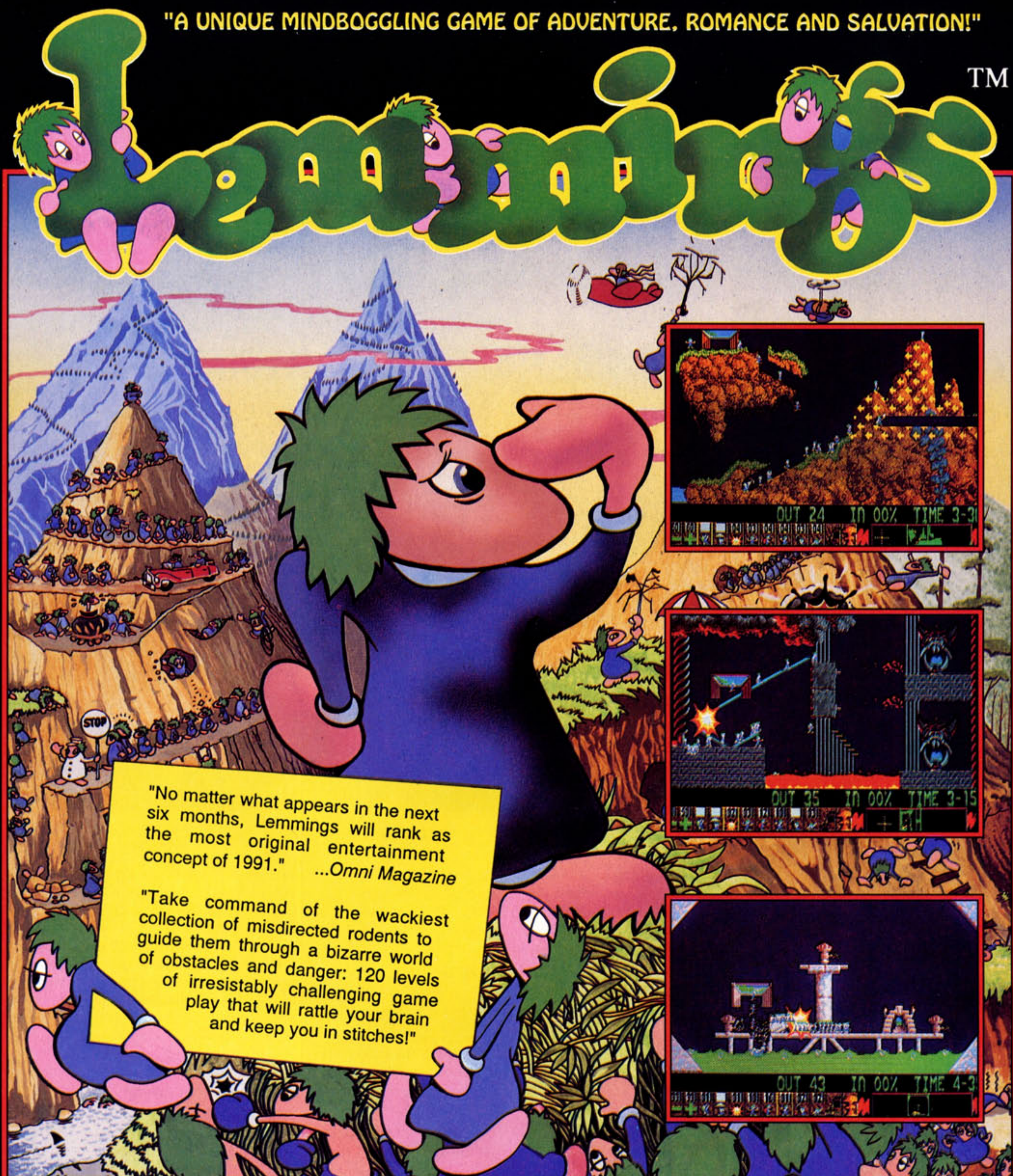



**Medieval Lords / pg 52**

## Features



## Departments


"A UNIQUE MINDBOGGLING GAME OF ADVENTURE, ROMANCE AND SALVATION!"
Lemmings
TM
STOP
"No matter what appears in the next six months, Lemmings will rank as the most original entertainment concept of 1991." ...Omni Magazine
"Take command of the wackiest collection of misdirected rodents to guide them through a bizarre world of obstacles and danger: 120 levels of irresistably challenging game play that will rattle your brain and keep you in stitches!"
OUT 24 IN 00%
OUT 35 IN 00% TIME 3-15
OUT 43 IN 00%

**Access**
Salt Lake City, UT

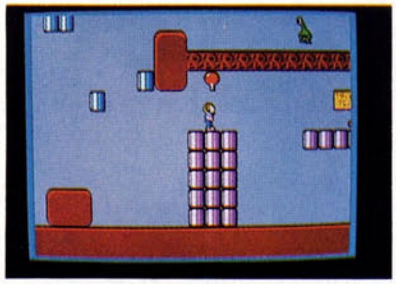
LINKS CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE: This expansion disk for *Links: The Challenge of Golf* adds the Bay Hill Club & Lodge. Enough water hazards to end California's drought condition make this course tremendously challenging. Since Bay Hill has one of the toughest finishing holes in golf, this course will really be a "must play" for the serious *Links* player. IBM ($24.95). Circle Reader Service #1.

**Accolade**
San Jose, CA 95128

JACK NICKLAUS PRESENTS THE MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES OF 1991: Accolade is the entertainment software publisher with the strongest record in supplemental products, giving their driving games and golf games, in particular, long shelf life and tremendous replay value. This course disk, requiring *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf*, contains three new courses: Hazeltine National Golf Club (U.S. Open Championship), Royal Birkdale Golf Club (British Open Championship) and Crooked Stick Golf Club (PGA Championship). IBM ($21.95). Circle Reader Service #2.

### Advertiser Index




*Commander Keen*


*California Games II*


*Masque Video Poker*


*Medieval Warriors*



*Micro League Personal Pro*


*F29 Retaliator*

**Apogee Software Productions**
4206 Mayflower
Garland, TX 75043

COMMANDER KEEN: What's part shareware and part commercial software? Why, *Commander Keen*, of course. This trilogy of highly "Nintendo-esque" arcade games is a classic scroll-around-and-zap game. The game has been translated into a very smooth-performing IBM format and is of true commercial quality. The first game of the trilogy is available as shareware, the other two may only be purchased by direct order from Apogee. IBM ($30 for all three volumes). Circle Reader Service #3.

**Epyx, Inc.**
Redwood City, CA

CALIFORNIA GAMES II: In Epyx's first return to the floppy format in years, the **Atari Lynx** developer picks up where it left off. In *California Games II*, players are challenged with five radical events that are "more Californian" than comparing tans with George Hamilton. Three competitions take players on or over the water as they bodyboard, jet ski and hang glide (a real cliff cruncher, that one). Then, snowboarding opens with the player's on-screen persona parachuting down to a virgin slope and ends up as a wild downhill ride (complete with "snow bowl"). Finally, kneepads are in order for the skateboarding challenge. This aqueduct arena brings all of those arcade skateboarding games right to your PC (using VGA graphics and AdLib sound support). Epyx continues to be the leader in multi-venue action games. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

**Masque Publishing**
Englewood, CO

MASQUE VIDEO POKER: Every once in a while, a quality "gambling" game comes along. This is one of them. *Masque Video Poker* takes this popular casino moneymaker and turns it into a classroom/laboratory for players. Including variations for different video poker systems which are currently popular in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, the game offers advice and statistics enough to sharpen any player's skills. It might even help them to actually turn a profit at most video poker machines. *[Ed: Of course, past or simulated performance is no guarantee of future success.]* IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

# SOME OF HITLER'S DEADLIEST WEAPONS NEVER SAW ACTION. UNTIL NOW.




Imagine the shock of American B-17 pilots when the first German jet fighters whistled past. The lumbering bombers seemed to be standing still, sitting ducks for radical aircraft years ahead of their time.

The twin-jet Me 262 unleashed a volley of 24 air-to-air missiles in less than a tenth of a second. It's just one of the little-known aircraft you'll encounter in *Secrets Weapons of the Luftwaffe.*™ You'll also blast off at 16,000 feet per minute in the incredible Me 163 Komet rocket fighter. And pilot the remarkable Gotha 229, which bore an uncanny resemblance to today's Stealth bomber.



**Were the Allies saved by Hitler's blunder?**

As you'll read in the 224-page historical manual, Hitler's demand for a blitz bomber delayed deployment of the Me 262s as fighters.

In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe,* you can reverse that decision. And pit these revolutionary weapons with the more familiar German Bf 109 and FW 190 fighters against the Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortresses, P-51 Mustangs, and P-47 Thunderbolts. All technically, historically, and graphically authentic.

**Fly in the face of danger.**

Desperate to stop the massive daylight bombing raids of the Allies, the Germans rushed their experimental aircraft into service in late 1944. You'll experience the nail-biting terror of piloting aircraft that were as dangerous to fly as they were to the enemy.

You'll rock with the impact of a direct hit. Struggle for visibility through oil smeared, bullet-shattered canopies. Watch in horror as your engine burns. And wrestle for control against G-forces and rough wind conditions. All with the vivid realism of bit-mapped 256-color VGA graphics and room-rattling sound effects.



In *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe,* you'll do more than relive the air combat over Germany from 1943 to 1945. You'll decide for yourself whether these exotic superweapons could have changed the outcome of the war.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES

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**Merit Software**
Dallas, TX

MEDIEVAL WARRIORS: Monty Python used to say, "And now for something completely different." Then they'd produce familiar elements assembled in an offbeat way. So it is with *Medieval Warriors*. Two armies, consisting of twelve identical (except in name) warriors, battle over four different terrain settings in a military strategy game with a twist. While the nature of the tactical combat gives the game an *Ancient Art of War* feel, the capacity for modem play sets the game apart from that predecessor. A pseudo-hex-grid overlay regulates the movement of the pieces, which are all rated for strength, speed and weapons ability. Amiga ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #6.

**Micro League Sports**
Newark, DE

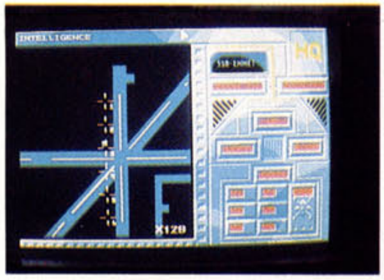
MICRO LEAGUE PERSONAL PRO: At last, something for the computer golfer that will enhance his or her game on the course. *Personal Pro* is just that, an interactive golf instructor that can be programmed to fit an individual's game. Every detail of every major golf problem is analyzed in "clinic" style, showing cause, effect and solutions. With an easy "answer the question" interface, the game's database proceeds to present different views and angles of ball flight, stance and swing to help the non-pros among us "see what we're doing wrong." Solutions are then presented in the form of animations. What a clever piece of software! *[Ed: Of course, past and simulated performance is no guarantee of future success.]* IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #7.

**Ocean Software, Ltd.**
Manchester, UK

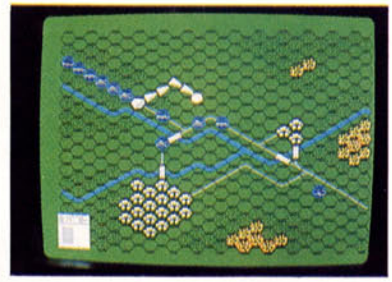
F29 RETALIATOR: A typical European-style flight simulator, this program simulates the Advanced Tactical Fighter prototypes (which inspired competition between the Grumman and Lockheed coalitions within the U.S.) in that players can choose to fly either the X-29 or YF-22. The game is amazingly fast-scrolling and has an abundance of available missions and equipment, along with a moving map navigation aid and a Maverick TV camera function to add to the experience. The ground terrain is detailed in certain theaters, yet spartan in others. With the exception of the artwork for the YF-22 aircraft in the simulation still being modeled after speculation, difficulty in cycling through the weapons options, a somewhat cumbersome user interface and inability to install to the hard disk, *F-29 Retaliator* has plenty to offer even the most discriminating simulation fan. Amiga ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #8.

**Psygnosis**
Brookline, MA

ARMOUR-GEDDON: There is nothing, repeat *nothing*, small about this game. Psygnosis' action games have always been quality fare, but now they are publishing a fascinating concept in vehicle "simulation".




*Armour-Geddon*



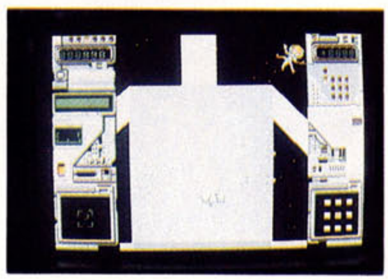
*Brigade Commander*



*Pro Tennis Tour 2*



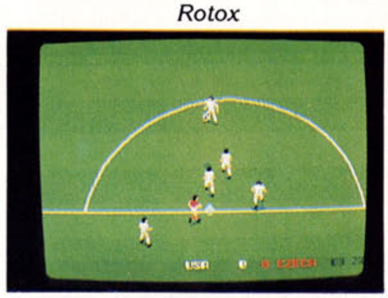
*The Gold of the Aztecs*



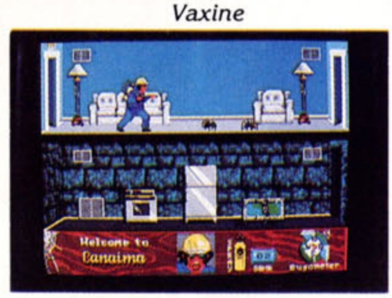
*Rotox*




*Vaxine*



*World Class Soccer*




*Arachnophobia*

Requiring some strategic planning in the "building" and "research" of the helicopters, fighters, bombers, hovercraft, heavy and light tanks needed to sweep the area clean of "an ultimate terrorist threat," the game plays like several great sim/arcade games rolled into one. The real-time element of play is challenging enough, but add to that a direct-connect capability for team or head-to-head play, and you've got a Psygnosis "psygnature" product. The smooth scrolling graphics presented with "camera angles" and multi-perspective viewing make this a cutting-edge technical game package. Amiga ($49.99). Circle Reader Service #9.

**TR Development, Inc.**
Madison, WI

BRIGADE COMMANDER: A wargamer's wargame for the Amiga, *Brigade Commander* is a tactical modern battlefield simulation with lots of extras. On a hex-based grid (at 500 meters to the hex) and played in real time, this solitaire-only game allows for stacking of ten units per hex and gives animations and sounds for combat and movement. The big plus is the terrain and unit design features (akin to SSG's Warplan and Warpaint systems). Included in the package is a Desert Storm data disk, with scenarios of "hypothetical" clashes in the desert (the real ones were too one-sided). All in all, the game is an interesting study in modern tactical air-land warfare. Amiga ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

*(Continued on page 91)*





# THEIR FINEST MISSIONS.™ UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

### WAIT NO MORE!

If you couldn't get enough of *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*,™ you're ready for Their *Finest Missions*: *Volume One*.

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Since the release of *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain*, players have enjoyed using the game's Mission Builder to create custom missions and share them with friends. Now we're bringing you a unique selection of *our* favorite missions in an advanced mission disk.

*Their Finest Missions: Volume One* includes twenty original, carefully crafted missions designed to challenge even the most skilled computer pilots. Like *Their Finest Hour*, you'll have a chance to test your skill and cunning for either the RAF or the Luftwaffe. And for some real derring-do, we've included game designer Larry Holland's own favorite mission, SUICIDE.



### ✈ SUICIDE

Suicide places you in immediate peril as your Bf110, ordered to bomb and strafe the Dover CHL radar station, is surrounded by six top ace Spitfire MK2s. Other missions include:

### ✈ SWEEP1

Sweep1 finds you in the cockpit of a Bf109, facing three flight groups of Spitfire Mk2s. You're far from your base and with only a novice wingman to aid you. Good luck!

### ✈ JIM2

Jim2 pits your Bf109 against as many as 37 RAF fighters. Holy smoke!

### ✈ TOUGH2

Touch2 has you at the controls of a lone Ju-87 Stuka bomber. Your mission is to defeat two flights of the faster Hurricane Mk1 and complete a dive bombing run. Expect some pretty hot action.

### ✈ LORDHAHA

Lordhaha has you and a novice rear gunner in a lone Bf110 where you must avoid four flights of Hurricanes and Spitfires to complete a bombing and strafing mission. You'll need all your wits about you for this one.



### GET YOUR COPY NOW

*Their Finest Missions*: *Volume One* for the IBM PC is available only from Lucasfilm Games. To get your copy, order direct by calling 1-800-STAR-WARS. In Canada, call 1-800-828-7927. Just $19.95 plus shipping and handling.

### *THEIR FINEST MISSIONS: VOLUME ONE*

To get your copy of *Their Finest Missions*, send check or money order for $23.95 ($19.95 plus $4.00 for shipping and handling) payable to Lucasfilm Games, The Company Store P.O. Box 10307, San Rafael, CA 94912. **Or, call 1-800-STAR-WARS.**

**In Canada, call 1-800-828-7927.** Be sure to specify which IBM format your copy of *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* is (IBM 5.25" or IBM 3.5") so we can be sure to send you the correct disk. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

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*Lucasfilm™ Games*

# Waiting for the Low-End CD

## The Sights and Sounds of the Consumer Electronics Show

Sometimes, visiting Chicago seems like one is standing in a perpetual cab queue. This is especially true during the Consumer Electronics Show. Hotel space, restaurant reservations and taxi service are always at a premium and lengthy waits seem to be the order of the day. It's usually worth it once one arrives at the desired destination, however. There are some great restaurants and some marvelous cultural opportunities to be experienced, whether one's forte is escargot or eclairs, blues or Bach.

This year's Consumer Electronics Show reminded us of waiting for a taxi. There are plenty of exciting products ahead, but the "great leap" advances in game design and presentation seem to be in a marketing limbo, somewhat analogous to a Moscow food line, as many publishers build interim products and hold their collective breath, waiting for that elusive CD entertainment platform that will capture the heart of America's heartland and pump that life-giving cashflow directly from consumer's pocketbooks. To be sure, the state of the art is advancing, but the evolution of the technology is crawling at a slow pace compared to the leap expected when the CD catalyst hits the market. Most of our favorite publishers have CD projects. Few are close to finishing them. The market simply is not here, as of yet.



L'Empereur

### Laying Track on the Entrepreneurial Frontier

Some companies are placing heavy priorities on CD projects. They are parlaying expensive "research and development" into products for the small market share that will adopt CD platforms in their earliest incarnations. This approach seems guaranteed to give these companies a presence in the new media and to provide them with name recognition as the market expands in the future. **ICOM**, heretofore primarily a developer for other software publishers with their *Deja Vu* and *Shadowgate* series of games, is now coming on strong in CD entertainment. Not only will they start shipping *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective* as a fully interactive movie (on the **Turbo-Grafx 16**, this summer), but they plan an interactive cartoon based on their own fantasy world (*Beyond Shadowgate*); a first-person poker simulation; a futuristic arena game (*Arena 3000*), a cyborg combat game (*Cyborg 2127*) and a sophisticated *Alter Ego*-style arcade game called *Shapeshifter*, as well. They are not simply using traditional resources, either. Michael Pole, producer of the Saturday morning cartoon series *The Real Ghostbusters* is "directing" *Beyond Shadowgate* and Frank J. Biondi, chairman of **Viacom Entertainment**, serves on the company's board. Since **Viacom** has a heavy presence in the music video business, it seems reasonable to expect that at least one CD product will be built around music videos.



UltraBots

**Psygnosis**, the British publisher of graphically intense arcade-style and action/adventure games, has been relatively quiet in the U.S. market until recently. With *Lemmings*, its first MS-DOS title, the company has made a bold foray into the American entertainment software market. They are not only already making their mark on traditional forms of computerized entertainment (**Electronic Arts** is publishing *The Killing Game Show, Shadow of the Beast* and *Lemmings* on the **Sega Genesis**; **Data East** is publishing a *Lemmings* coin-op game and **SunSoft** is placing the suicidal little varmints on the **Super NES**), but are also heavily committed to CD development. The *Lemmings* title is slated to appear on **Commodore**'s CDTV later this year, and *Planetside*, a futuristic flight combat game featuring fractal-generated three-dimensional landscapes and great sound, should appear on a Japanese platform, CDTV and CD-I platforms.

Another presence which should be felt prior to Christmas is **NovaLogic**. Up until now, the company has been a developer for other publishers. They developed *Wolfpack* for **Broderbund** and are working on *The Rocketeer* for **Walt Disney Software**. They have also been working on CD-I-based products for **A.I.M.** (American Interactive Multimedia). As a result of their work, they have put together some marvelous tools for three-dimensional modeling of computer game "characters" and "objects." **Data East** will publish *Ultrabots*, a science-fiction oriented strategy and combat game, and the as-yet-unnamed *Battlefield 2000* (working title), a post-holocaust simulation of artificial warfare featuring modern tanks with realistic features and controls. Both games feature beautifully rendered "vehicles" and landscapes, with some polygon-filled objects to hide behind. Jim Sachs, Amiga artist extraordinaire, rendered the ghastly post-holocaust landscapes in the science fiction game and the "matte" paintings provide a mood reminiscent of film designer Ridley Scott's worlds (*Alien* and *Blade Runner*).

Another exciting result of the coming CD era is that Claymation genius Will Vinton has joined with computer game designer Kellyn Beck (*Defender of the Crown, Rocket Ranger* and *Centurion*) to publish interactive entertainment products under the

**Cine-Play** label. The initial release, *Detectron*, features 3-D modeling and an easy-to-use interface that seems sure to appear on multiple CD platforms in the near future. It even features (surprise!) claymation mutants.

Not all companies who invested heavily in CD-based entertainment have fared well. Yet, some of their products are about to come to market. **Cinemaware**'s *It Came From The Desert* is still expected to appear "real soon now" on the **NEC** *Turbo-Grafx 16*. In addition, **Spinnaker Software**'s *LaserLords* is expected to debut on CD-I before the end of the year, even though the company is (at least temporarily) out of the entertainment software business.

## Standard Oscillating Procedure

Being so close to a breakthrough in data storage and innovative software presentation, one would think that all is well in the entertainment software industry. Yet this is *not* the feeling among computer game publishers. CDTV's slow start along with the long-delayed debut of CD-I has created uncertainty. Combine this uncertainty with the "standards" controversy and the road to CD paradise seems fraught with thorns. **Sony** is attempting to create their own proprietary standard for CD-ROM storage. Prior to their proprietary standard, **Nintendo** was planning for **Sony CD-ROMs** to be the dominant player in the **Super NES** market. Now, **Nintendo** is planning to switch horses in the middle of the stream and change to the Philips' standard before too long. Our sources indicate that they are asking their developers to choose between standards.

**Sega** was also soliciting developer support for a CD platform at CES. Their CD player, to be released in Japan during the fall of this year and *possibly* to reach our shores by the next fall, will allegedly have its own 68000 processor, contain 64K of ROM to handle eight channels of sound, use 32-kHz sampling, feature 10-18 frames of video per second (if accompanied by sound), utilize 6.5 MB of storage on each CD and allow up to 56 minutes of full-motion video to be stored on each disk. The system will even feature surround sound and some more advanced video features for extended screen handling.

We also discovered that video-game developers are not the only ones faced with standards-based dilemmas. In addition to **Sony**'s proprietary standard, the **Microsoft** CD-ROM-XA approach and the approved technical specifications of the Philips' CD-I project, **NEC** announced their *New Interactive Display* (*NID*) technology. Fortunately for multi-media personal computer developers, this technology *is* compatible with the MPEG video standards and the multi-media hardware. The technology allows for 100:1 video compression which, in turn, allows 20,000 still pictures per compact disc or up to sixty minutes of full-motion video per disk. The company claims that its "standard" will provide the highest rate of compression with the clearest possible pictures. It doesn't feature resolution as high as DVI, CD-I or IVD (it is 512 x 256 as opposed to 640 x 480 and up), but judging from the **NEC** demonstration at CES, this claim is probably true.




*The Rocketeer*

Finally, not only computer developers, but also gamers will have to make a major sound card decision in the near future. It is no longer satisfactory to talk about a card being **AdLib** compatible. The new *Gold Card* features true 16-bit technology and almost double the dynamic range of its closest competitors. The difference between the old board and the new board is phenomenal, but (alas!) developers will be required to provide yet another new driver to get the most out of the board. Since **Yamaha** plans to place their chip (the heart of the card) on the motherboard of twenty different PC manufacturers in the near future, **AdLib** promises that the Gold Card technology will not conflict with these new machines' additional sound capabilities.

## Life in the Third Dimension

Perhaps the most pervasive trend in entertainment software was the amount of three-dimensional modeling to be seen in upcoming computer games. **Cine-Play**'s *Detectron* has digitized film and claymation images and moves them across a scanned backdrop. The story is built around a post-holocaust Washington D. C. where people are being kept in a human preserve something like the "Wild Animal Parks" that one would see in the present-day United States. The distinctive walks and movements of some of the characters are *very* interesting.

An even more sophisticated technique of digitizing film is being used in **Walt Disney Software**'s *The Rocketeer*, an action game being developed by **NovaLogic**. In a technique reminiscent of Disney himself bringing in film footage of actual animals in order for his animators to get the moves right, **NovaLogic** is capturing all the action scenes on film (with real human beings); digitizing the figures and manipulating them on-screen. Those who enjoy the film will enjoy this continuing adventure that picks up *after* the plot line in the film and was approved by *Rocketeer* creator and comic artist Dave Stevens.

**Data East** unveiled two additional products being developed by **NovaLogic**. The most detailed is *UltraBots*, a robot combat game with a fascinating story treatment and a strategy game to support the action scenes. The company has used ray-tracing to develop three-dimensional models of their distinctive robots and they can manipulate them easily on-screen using their custom tools. In the same way, they have developed a near-future version of armored warfare. It is a three-dimensional world with extremely dark perspectives and fast-moving bit-mapped scaling. Both the near-future battlefield simulation and *UltraBots* feature distinctive cockpits for each vehicle and two separate view screens which update the game environment from two different perspectives.

**Accolade**'s *Les Manley – Lost in L.A.* is a graphic adventure which, on occasion, uses three-dimensional digitized images overlaid across digitized oil paintings. The artwork provides a rich texture for this satirical approach to the stereotypical Southern California lifestyle. The game is a pseudo-sequel to *Search for the King* with a new "look and feel."

Regular *CGW* readers will remember **Sierra**'s *Adventures of Willy Beamish* (designed and produced at their **Dynamix** subsidiary) from the "Behind The Screens" feature in the July issue (#84). Designer Jeff Tunnell has created a light-hearted adventure that pushes the edge of the three-dimensional envelope in its handling of character animation and backgrounds featuring a perception of depth.

**Sierra** opted for near realism in their approach to *Police Quest 3: The Kindred*. In this product, as well as *Conquests of the Longbow: Legend of Robin Hood*, the artists captured live actors on video and used a rotoscoping technique to enhance the scenes with sometimes colorful and sometimes starkly realistic portrayals of scenes that look almost as if they have leaped from the cinema screen itself.

As noted earlier in this article, **Psygnosis**' *Planetside* features three-dimensional fractal landscapes at twenty frames per second with no compression necessary. The player flies a futuristic atmospheric fighter across the barren wastes of a mountainous planet in this air combat simulation.

In addition, *Wing Commander*'s legacy leads on. **Interplay**'s *Star Trek* features three-dimensional bit-mapped scaling ships in the tactical space combat sequences. **Konami**'s *Top Gun: Head-to-Head Dogfighting Simulation* uses digitized images from the motion picture combined with bit-mapped scaling techniques designed to enhance the look of the planes and their *Team Suzuki* game (originally released in Europe by **Gremlin**) presents motorcycle racing via the same basic bit-mapped scaling technique. In *Aces* (scheduled for 1992), **Dynamix**'s latest foray into historical air combat, Damon Slye is expected to unleash a faster version of their patented 3-Space technology mixed with technology

# TIMEQUEST™

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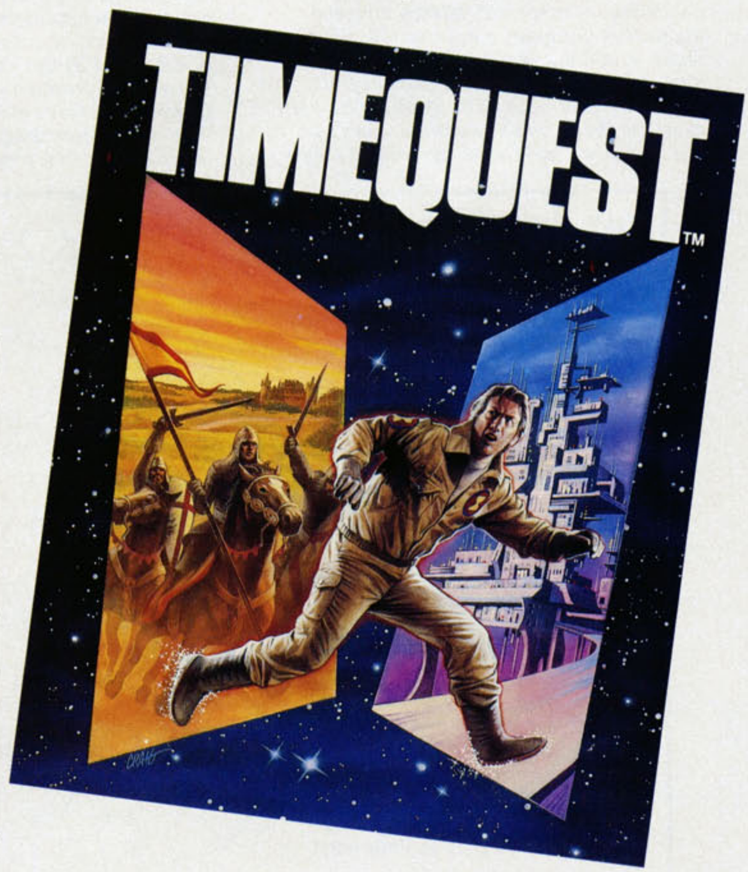
A high speed chase through time, TIMEQUEST is a classic adventure game that features pageantry, danger, and puzzle-oriented adventure. The game is epic in scope, spanning four continents and three thousand years — from Stonehenge to Hitler.

Criss-crossing time and space, you will travel to England, Rome, Peking, Cairo, Babylon/Baghdad, and Mexico from 1361 BC to 1940 AD, meeting Caesar, Hitler, Napoleon, Genghis Khan, Attila the Hun, Cleopatra, Michaelangelo, and many others.

Written by Bob Bates, author of *Sherlock: The Riddle of the Crown Jewels* and *Arthur: The Quest for Excalibur,* TIMEQUEST is the latest from Legend Entertainment, the company that brought you the hit game *Spellcasting 101: Sorcerers Get All the Girls.* A treat for science-fiction fans and adventure enthusiasts alike, the game features:

- ☐ high resolution EGA graphics
- ☐ superb musical score featuring RealSound as well as Roland and AdLib support
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- ☐ menu driven parser

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EGA graphics shown above. Actual screens may vary.

*Circle Reader Service #44*

that uses more layered bit-maps to offer better definition of aircraft shapes, terrain, etc. The game is based on air combat in the Pacific, replete with both carrier-based and land-based missions. Finally, **Origin**'s *Strike Commander* takes textured mapping, gourard shading and disguised polygons to new heights in order to create a near-future world of air combat. With regard to the latter, readers of the *Wingman* pulp adventure series will feel right at home in the world of Chris Robert's post-modern milieu.

## "Scan"tily Clad

In addition to the lavish oils of *Les Manley – Lost In L.A.* and the bright cartoon color scheme of *The Adventures of Willy Beamish*, there are plenty of products which take advantage of new scanning technology. Naturally, **Sierra** and **Lucasfilm** lead the way in this usage. **Sierra**'s **Dynamix** subsidiary performed pioneering work in this area with *Rise of the Dragon* and they are following up on their success with *Heart of China*, the same technology with an entirely different feel. **Sierra** unveiled the mother company's approach in *King's Quest V* and they are continuing their efforts in numerous releases. *Leisure Suit Larry 5: Passionate Patti Does A Little Undercover Work* (we know there wasn't an *LSL 4*, but we don't want the Sequel Police after *us*, either) uses 256 colors to unleash the gaudiest pastel palette since they started manufacturing lawn flamingos. As if that weren't enough, the publisher has upgraded *Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards* into a 256-color "touch and grope" (no more typing!) version with a palette borrowed from Merv Griffin's sport coat linings. A course of a different color is suggested by *Mixed-Up Fairy Tales* and *Conquests of the Longbow: Legend of Robin Hood* (by *Quest for Glory*'s Lori Cole and *Conquests of Camelot*'s Christy Marx respectively). Both products suggest their respective genres with lavish use of natural colors in their 256-color VGA landscapes and interiors.

**Lucasfilm** is now unveiling their approach with gouache watercolors scanned into their three-dimensional graphic adventure engine. *The Secret of Monkey Island II: LeChuck's Revenge* features not only an extravagant use of 256 colors scanned from gouache originals, but light sourcing and shadowing, as well. The graphics of *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* are not quite as impressive as those in *Monkey*, but the presentation is significantly enhanced by the cinematography of Hal Barwood in presenting different angles and perspectives from which to view the action. One of the most unique aspects of the latest *Indy* is that players actually "earn"



*Legend of Robin Hood*

the on-screen interface, one step at a time, during one of the sequences.

With 3-D modeling, computer generated images, scanned backgrounds, digitized images integrated into existing programs and rotoscoping, computer art is developing a full pastiche of techniques to enhance the look, quality and credibility of the gaming experience. The entire industry seems to be in a "tooling up" mode that can only benefit gamers in the long run.

## Enter the Interface

Two major trends seemed evident with regard to computer game interface design. One trend tended toward simplifying the in-

*(Continued on page 81)*

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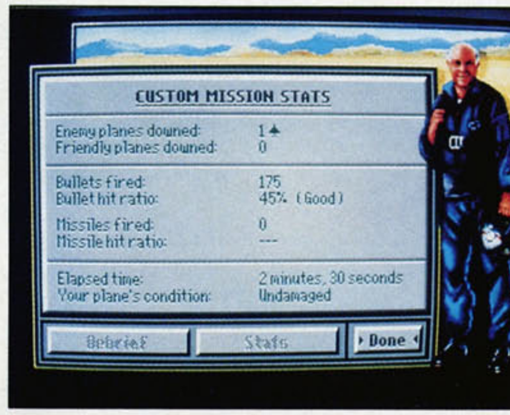
ENTERTAINMENT • SOFTWARE

# When do Seven Gs Only Cost
# CHUCK YEAGER'S

*by Russell*

**C***huck Yeager's Air Combat* (*YAC*) is Sierra Hotel. For the uninitiated that means *YAC* is [Expletive deleted] Hot! For the initiated that means that *YAC* is a state-of-the-art flight simulator that convincingly covers three eras of air combat: World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Although *YAC* can't pull your stomach down into your crotch or cause your chest to involuntarily exhale with a grunt while whipping around in seven-G turns the way real flying can, *YAC* can do the rest. Pull six plus Gs in a sustained maneuver and your vision will fade to a black screen. Pull sustained negative Gs and your vision will begin to red out. More than once this reviewer has had to back off the stick at the end of a high-G maneuver to prevent a blackout. It can be frustrating watching the enemy drift into view just as your screen begins to black out. Worse is to see the enemy lining up for a shot when your screen begins to go black. The G-loads may not hit your body when you sit in your den in front of *YAC*, but the tension and excitement will. Anyone who has pulled significant Gs in aerobatic or combat maneuvering will recognize the grunt and groan points in the cockpit of *YAC*.




*Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* was designed entirely in-house at **Electronic Arts**. Designer Brent Iverson said, "this simulation offers flexibility and the exciting progression of air combat, starting with prop-driven aircraft in World War II, leading to the jet-powered dominance of Korea, and finally to the modern-day guided-missile airplanes that fought in the grueling Vietnam War."

With *YAC*, Electronic Arts brings to market the third (but perhaps not last) product done in connection with Chuck Yeager. The first was *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer*. It was originally released as *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight* **Simulator**. That name was changed to *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight* **Trainer** when **SubLogic** complained that the term "flight simulator" was their protected title. Although EA may well have been able to refute that claim in court, they decided a name change would be easier. If you have a copy of game with the original title, hold on to it — it's a collector's item!

The second product was *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0*, an update of the original product which added a number of features including air races and formation flying. (This version was released on Amiga and Atari ST formats earlier this year.)

## Blasts in the Past

What separates *YAC* from other combat flight simulators, beyond the obvious connection with General Yeager, is that it covers more than three decades in the evolution of air combat. With *YAC* you will be able to experience in one program what it has taken several to do in the past. For example, you will have to learn significantly different tactics for each of the aircraft. Flying the P-51, you learn not only how to deal with stalls, but also how to handle the realistically simulated problem of loss of lift due to excessive speed. In the F-86 you learn the art of dogfighting in jet aircraft without the modern tools of air combat: missiles. And, of course, in the F-4 you learn a new set of tactics as you use radar-guided Sparrows and heat-seeking Sidewinders.



Cover Art by Dru Blair

## $59.95? When It's...

# AIR COMBAT

Sipe

While real pilots may find minor points to quibble about (as they can do with any computer flight simulator/game), the flight dynamics and weaponry for each plane is as historically correct as one could reasonably expect in a game. Example: although not entirely accurate, Iverson added a 2G lift factor to planes flying beyond their flight envelopes. A real-life plane caught in a unrecoverable power dive would augur in (reality is harsh). In *YAC*, because of the 2G lift factor, there is a chance of recovering from the dive if you apply constant back pressure on the stick and there is enough altitude to allow recovery.

### The Planes! The Planes!



In missions covering the three eras you will fly the North American P-51, Focke-Wulf FW-190, North American F-86 Saber, MiG 15 Fagot, F-4D Phantom II, and MiG-21 Fishbed. Each has its own flight model that accurately simulates real-life performance.




In addition to these six aircraft, eleven others are modeled in the game, although you cannot choose to fly them (B-17, B-29, B-52, F-105, Me-109, Me-110, Me-262, Me-163, MiG-17, P-47, Yak-9). Beautiful bit-mapped images of the planes are available for viewing in the test flight and tactics briefing area of the game. The planes used in actual game play are nicely rendered using polygon-fill shapes.

A *lot* of things changed in the state of air combat between World War II and Vietnam. Jet aircraft replaced props; on-board radar replaced radio vectoring and mere visual sighting; and missiles replaced guns. Well, they didn't completely replace guns, but that is a story for another time. *YAC* is a wonderful way to experience this evolution in aircraft and air combat tactics.

### Performance Specs

The program runs very smoothly on both 386s and 286s. Watching the combat action is the closest thing we have seen in a computer flight simulation to actual gun camera footage. It's smooth! The dithered horizon looks great. Although there is a slightly annoying jagged edge affect on the horizon when you bank your aircraft, you quickly get used to it. After a couple of play sessions you don't even notice it.

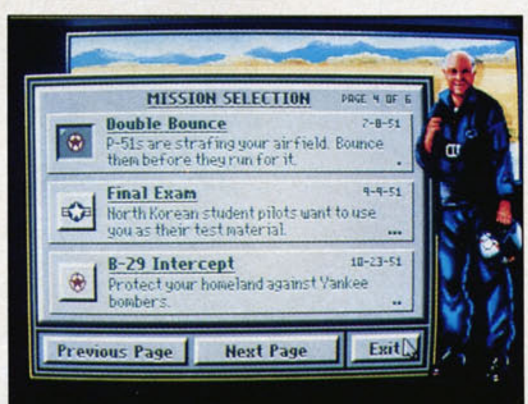
| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Chuck Yeager's Air Combat |
| SYSTEMS: | IBM |
| COPY PROTECT: | Documentation Look-Up |
| PRICE: | $59.95 |
| DESIGNER: | Brent Iverson |
| PUBLISHER: | Electronic Arts<br>San Mateo, CA |

An in-office play session with a Vietnam combat pilot vet and computer gamer gave us some insights to the game. He told us that the the graphics were the best he has seen yet and that the flight models seemed very good. His only "that's not right" comment was that in real combat aircraft you don't hear or feel anything when you break the sound barrier. In *YAC* there is a small "explosion" and a shaking of the plane when you break the barrier.

*YAC* offers a number of selectable information windows which can be displayed during flight. The *Envelope Window* (one of General Yeager's unique contributions to the game) displays a dynamic rendering of your current flight envelope. Start pulling Gs and your flight envelope shrinks, increasing the chance of stalls or thrust failures. Ease up on the stick and the plane becomes more manageable. The Envelope Window graphically displays the physics involved.

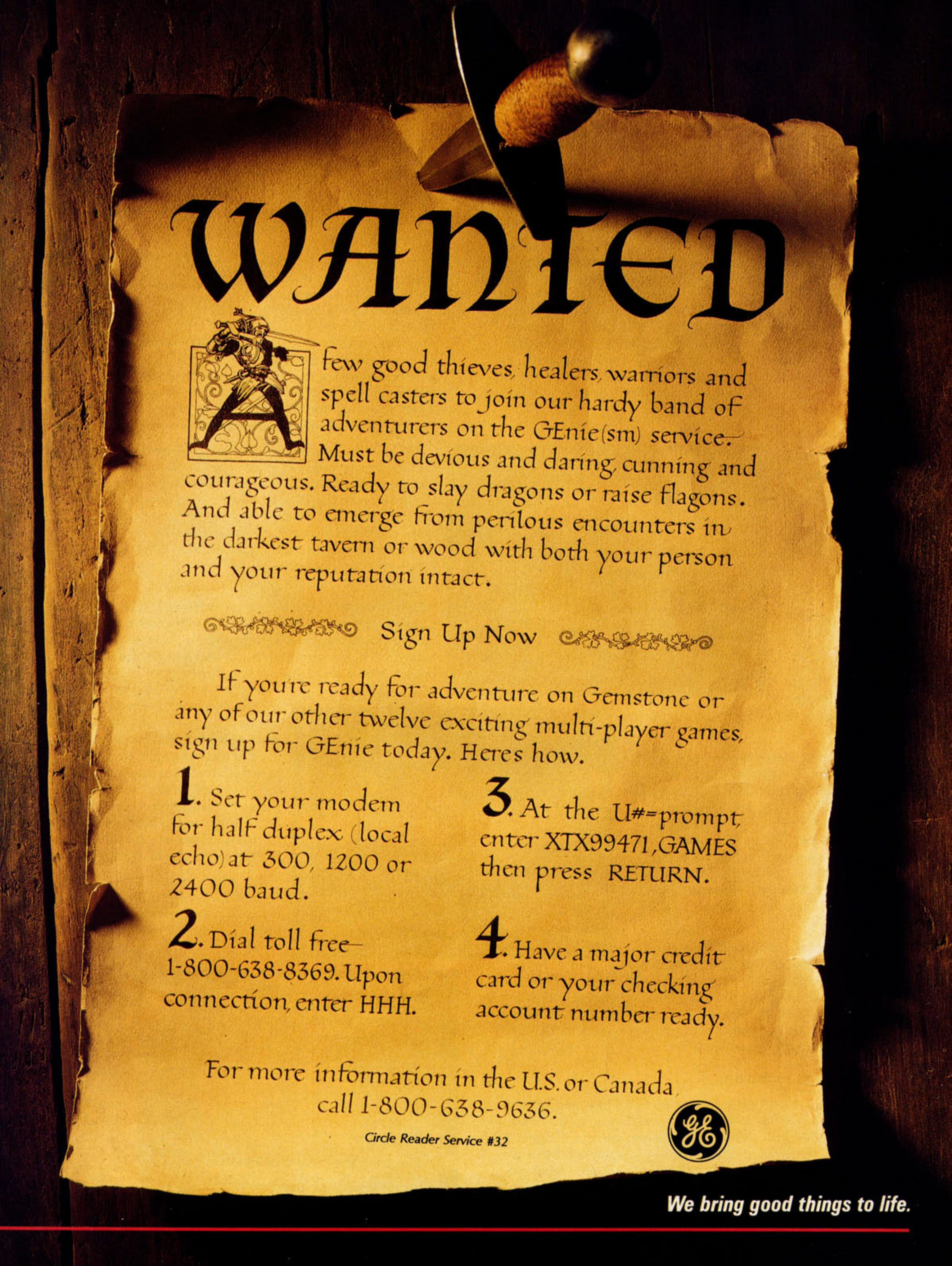
The *Target Window* does a good job of solving the inherent problem of tunnel vision associated with computer flight simulators. Once you select an enemy plane, the Target Window tells you his direction and shows you a miniature display of his aspect in relation to your plane. If he is at your six o'clock aiming at you the window will display "6 o'clock" and the enemy plane will have its nose pointed at you. Unfortunately, none of the information windows can be used in the campaign game. Thus you lose the situational awareness created by the Target Window when playing the campaign. Fortunately you can use Target-to-Plane and Plane-to-Target views in the campaign. They are also great aids in establishing situational awareness.

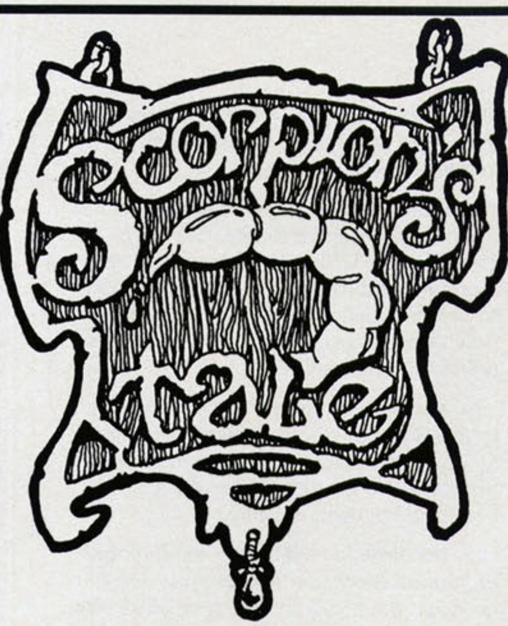
The *Yeager Window* displays the General's now famous mug when he wants to give advice such as "Bandit on your six — break!" or "You're taking a pounding!" or "Raise your landing gear." OK, so maybe the Yeager Window is just for beginners.



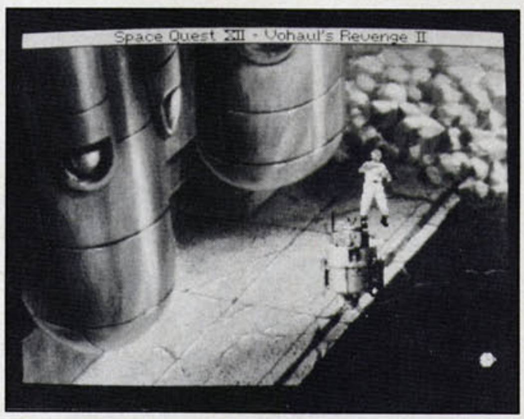

The Map Window shows the distance and direction of other aircraft, both friend and foe.

(Continued on page 22)


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# Scorpion's Tale




*Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" is a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind with a nice cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!*

Just step right in and cool off. Pretty hot out there, now that the dog days of August are with us. Fred, however, is not with us this time. As usual, he's off at the annual Grues Convention in the Dark Room at Colossal Cave. This year, they're going to try and get up an expedition to go on a quest for the Globe of Eternal Darkness. Hey, I know where you can find that... out in space, which is pretty dark. Hmmm... kind of makes that a "space quest," doesn't it?Yes, it's time once again for another *Space Quest*. Time, in fact, is what this one is all about. Our buddy Roger Wilco, galactic hero extraordinaire and occasional janitor, will be burning up the time lines in this adventure.

You can expect some big changes on this *Space Quest*. The interface has been completely re-done, and is now much like that in *King's Quest V*. It's all point-and-click; no parser, no typing in from the keyboard. The "walk" command from *King's Quest V* has also been implemented (a good thing, too!). You can move Roger around the screen just by clicking where you want him to go, and he'll walk there, avoiding obstacles along the way. No more tedious maneuvering (for the most part).

The graphics have also been upscaled, and are really pretty to look at. You'll want VGA and a fast machine to get the most out of the game. A sound card wouldn't hurt, either. The game also takes advantage of expanded memory if you have it (it worked very well with QEMM-386, my memory manager). Definitely, this is a high-end game (but you can send in your disks for exchange if you need the 16-color version; however, Sierra still recommends 10 Mhz speed or faster).

It's a good idea to save often while playing. There are many situations where a wrong move can bring the game (and Roger) to an untimely end. As a precaution, you should also keep a couple of save positions from different areas, in case you have to restore to pick up an item you missed the first time through.

So what's Roger up to this time? Actually, not much. All that running around space, saving the galaxy, rescuing people and whatnot, has sort of tired him out. The only thing he wants right now is a little vacation, where he can kick back, relax, and maybe brag a little about his accomplishments (okay, maybe brag a *lot*).So Roger's being a good little boy for a change, when a pair of Sequel Police march into the bar and ask him to step outside. Right there, you realize that his vacation is going to be put on hold for awhile... possibly a *long* while.

However, Roger has no choice (this part is all automatic), and out he strolls. What's going on? Well, it's a blast from the past, a moldy oldie... in fact, it's none other than... Vohaul! Yep, he's back from the almost-dead to plague our boy again.

Although it's more like the other way around. Roger has been rather a plague to Vohaul, who has decided to eliminate him once and for all, before going on to rule the universe. Take no chances, that's Vohaul's new philosophy.

However, before the Sequel Police can fry Roger, two mysterious strangers (no, not the Guys From Andromeda!) jump in and whisk him away. They open up a rip in time and shove him through it, and Roger's newest adventure really begins.It's a nasty place he finds himself in, though: Xenon, his home planet, but in pretty poor condition. Looks like a war had been fought here. Even worse, a glance up at the menu bar shows *Space Quest XII: Vohaul's Revenge 2*.

*Twelve*? The series is gonna go on *that* long? Now, *that's* frightening!

Never mind — Roger (and you) can worry about that later. Right now, he has to find a way out of this disaster area. There isn't much to work with, and the area is dangerous. A weirdo cyborg is wandering around and, if he catches up to Roger, it's all over. So when you see him, just go somewhere else and keep out of his way.

The most interesting thing is the building on the horizon (kind of reminded me of Darth Vader's helmet in a way). Naturally, our hero can't just walk up and knock on the front door (he probably wouldn't want to, even if he could). Getting in there requires a bit of work (this *is* an adventure game, after all!).

So Roger spends some time snooping around the streets and grabbing almost anything he can get his hot little hands on (almost, mind you; we don't want him to blow himself up). Then a little jaunt below (watch out for the acid!) followed by a short ride and — poof! Roger's in the big building.

Not that he should stay long. After all, the place is crawling with plenty of killer Sequel Police. Fortunately, one of those little time-hopper machines is sitting there, just begging to be used. Before pushing any buttons, however, Roger should take careful note of the symbols on the readout. Otherwise, it's going to be real hard to get back here again later.

Now, what should he push? As a matter of fact, any sequence at all. It won't

work the first time. Too bad, Roger. But don't let it get you down; anything you try the second time *will* work. Before long, our boy is on his way to *Space Quest X: Latex Babes of Estros*! (Hmm, are you sure you didn't end up in a *Leisure Suit Larry* game by accident?)

It's yet another weird place (Roger has a talent for ending up in them), full of rocky pinnacles and hungry giant birds ("roc"-a-bye Roger...). No sooner has he escaped from the nest, then he's captured by some rather (ahem) "healthy-looking" women. It's worse than it sounds, because one of them is *very* upset with our hero. Apparently, in a later *Space Quest* he sort of ran out on her, and now she wants revenge!

Shortly, he finds himself strapped to a chair in the lady's underwater den, facing one of the most horrible, fiendish tortures ever devised. But wait: a nasty, ugly, ravenous sea slug pops up out of the water! The women take off, leaving Roger to an even worse fate!

Hurry, Roger! Get yourself free so you can defeat the monster! (it's a good idea to save the game as soon as possible after being strapped in the chair, because there isn't much time to get things done in this sequence).

With the monster killed, the women return and proclaim Roger their hero. They're even willing to let bygones be bygones, and forget about torturing him to death (...generous of them). Now that they've made up, it's time to celebrateby going to... the mall!

No sooner said than done. Off they fly to the Galleria, where the women promptly forget about Roger as they rush off to the sales. No matter, Roger always did better on his own, anyway.

He has time for a leisurely exploration of various shops and stores (just don't go down the escalator because you-know-who's waiting below). Money's a concern, though. Roger doesn't have much in his pockets, and many things are a bit out of his price range. Maybe he could earn a few buckazoids at Monolith Burger?

This is a kind of arcade sequence. All Roger has to do is make up the burgers by putting lettuce, pickle, mayo, mustard, ketchup (ick, what a combination!) and a bun top on each patty as it comes from the oven. He gets one buckazoid for each correct burger he makes.

It's easy at the start, as the burgers come along slowly. However, after a few they start coming faster and faster, to the point where Roger just can't keep up with them anymore. Too many rejects, and Roger is a reject himself (although he gets to keep the money he's already made). Fortunately, if you'd rather not go through this, you can "wimp out" by asking for the money without doing the burgers. You get some cash and a boot out of the burger joint (trying it both ways, I preferred getting the boot).

Roger also has a certain lady's ATM card, but using it is a problem. After all, he's not a lady. But I'm sure he can think of a way around that (hey, Leisure Suit Larry managed it!). Don't overlook the bargain bin at the software store. Not only are there some interesting spoofs of games (check 'em all out), there's a very necessary *Space Quest IV* Hint Book. (A crazy parody of all hint books, but it does contain some important info!)

Of course, there's also the obligatory Radio Shock (a Dandy company) with all sorts of electronic gadgets for sale. However, even if Roger has enough bucks, he'll have to wait for a while before he can find out what he needs from here.

Check out the arcade (possibly more than once). Umm, wait, what's that coming into view there? Looks like a time hopper. Looks like Sequel Police getting out of the time hopper. Looks like time for Roger to get out of here!

Now, if Roger could just figure a way to elude the cops, he might be able to make it back to the time machine and head along for other places. Too bad he can't fly... or can he?

When he does get to the time machine, where does he go next? Hey, didn't he read the *Space Quest IV* Hint Book? It ain't there *just* for laughs. Ulence Flats, of course. Does that name ring a bell? Like, maybe, from *Space Quest I*? (and remember to note the symbols on the readout before leaving!)

Sure enough, that's the place. Look!, it has the same grubby old graphics as the first game did! (Wow, deju vu! Not to mention the fact that the graphics have come a *long* way since then!). In the bar is a trio of tough-looking customers, who sneer at our hero before tossing him out. Well, it's happened to him before (and probably will again).

Roger can handle it, though. He takes



Circle Reader Service #34



Circle Reader Service #61

his own form of revenge on the louts and sneaks back into the bar after they've left (save before doing anything, in case you run into them again before you leave). Then a quick dash to the time machine and it's off to Xenon again.

Fortunately, on this visit, none of the Sequel Police are around (they must all be out looking for him). Now he can take a look at the mysterious locked door. Too bad he doesn't have the combination to open it. He's not gonna find one, either. Brute force (kind of) is the only thing that will work. Did you bring anything out of the sewers with you, hmmm?

Next comes the lasers and control pad. If Roger could just see how the lasers are set (cough, hack, wheeze), he might be able to do something about them. Like use the control pad to straighten them out. Unfortunately, the only method I could find here was trial and error; there doesn't seem to be any place in the game where the numbers are written. Save before you start, and restore if you don't get them right.

Now at this point, you have a choice. If you don't care much about getting a perfect score, you can go ahead and finish up the game right here. If you want all those points, then you have to go back to the mall and buy a computer plug (after getting a look at one of those little boxes on the walkways).

Whichever route you take, make sure to avoid the droid! Roger is dead meat if a droid catches him wandering around. We wouldn't want that to happen! So keep a screen ahead of it as you go up hill and down dale to see what's in this interesting place.

For instance, there's a computer room with some familiar stuff on the screen. I wonder what would happen if a few of those icons were flushed from the system? (Although I don't recommend flushing *Space Quest IV*, unless you save the game first!)

Then there's Roger, Jr. Yep, Roger has (or will have) a son (this time travel business can be confusing). There's only one problem... Vohaul's mind is in Junior's body, and Junior's mind is on the diskette that Vohaul/Junior just tossed over the side!

Uh oh! It's getting worse: Vohaul/Junior is about to fight with Roger!! Will our hero survive? Can he get his son back in one piece? Will a few explanations be made of everything that's been going on?

Gee, I sure hope so. It would be a real bummer if Roger got this far only to mess up at the big finale! (but hey, that's what save games are for!)

Whew! Well, enough of time travelling and zaniness for now. I see by the old invisible clock on the wall it's that (hehe) time again. Meanwhile, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Visit the Game SIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu).

On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach Games RT).

By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! **cgw**

# The Rumor Bag

*by Billy Ray Houston, Jr.*

I knew that Fort Worth was primarily for good ole boys, but I couldn't resist meeting my source at Juanita's Mexican Restaurant (owned by novelist Dan Jenkins of *Semi-Tough* fame). Unfortunately, Juanita's was closed at that hour of the morning and we ended up around the corner at a burger bar that was half hamburger joint and half honky-tonk. My source turned out to be the classic Texan in the stereotypical ten-gallon hat. The floor, carpeted with peanut shells, shook with each step he took and the sweet "yellow roses" in the lounge stopped sipping their liquored lemonades long enough to check out his Brahma bull-sized shoulders as he strode by.

"Ya'll Houston?" he asked, turning the chair around so he could sit on it as though he were astride his saddle. I answered affirmatively. "Whut d'ya know about RAW?" he challenged. I explained that the company was formed in Britain and that they were entering the United States market with role-playing games, graphic adventures and wargames. I told him that the company has contracted with **Lyric Software** (*Worlds At War* and *Under The Ice*) to develop a game based on the Guadalcanal Campaign of World War II. He pulled a plug of Red Man chaw out of his pocket and bit off a mouthful. "So?" he grunted. I told him that the game would be, essentially, two products. One would handle the surface action and the other would be based on aerial combat. He spit, mingling tobacco juice with the peanut shells in a strange Escher-esque pattern. "And?" he prompted. I told him that the company is working on a game called *Fleet Commander* and hinted that some heavyweight inside sources were going to provide the specifications for all the ships.

He squinted at me with a classic Clint Eastwood expression and demanded, "Thet all?" I told them about their abstract strategy game to be called, appropriately enough, *Warfare*.

His ice-cold blue eyes chiseled grooves in my bag. I was glad I wasn't in a Wild West gunfight with him, so I spilled my latest rumor. "I don't suppose you know Martin Campion's *Medieval Lords* game from **SSI**, the one with the great gameplay and the Apple II-level graphics?" He nodded. "Well, Martin's next project is an ancients level wargame and he's hired a *real* artist to make it look great. It's even gonna have real sound support," I added hastily.

He added to the tobacco juice pattern once more. "Guess they're raht," he drawled, "ya'll do need some help gettin' rumors. Ah jest got back from Europe and some feller gave me this to give to you." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a French matchbook. He flipped it across the table and dug into the basket of peanuts on the table. I opened the matchbook and read the following: "**Lucasfilm Games** is believed to be working on a computer game based on a motion picture tie-in with Steve Spielberg. We think it is to be called *The Dig*, and it might very well be based on something to do with Moses."

He grabbed a longneck beer from a tray carried by a nearby waitress and proceeded to pour it over my head. "Next tahme," he threatened, "ya'll bettah have some substantive rumahs or ah'm gonna pour it in yore lap." I tried to explain to him that I'd put all the new games in the CES report, but he simply spit on the peanut shells and told me not to forget.

(To be continued) **cgw**

# When Do Seven Gs Cost...

*(Continued from page 17)*

Although it is not as complete as the VCR mode in **Dynamix**'s *Red Baron* (which stands head and shoulders above all other current VCR modes), *YAC*'s VCR mode is a good one. The VCR mode lets you replay the current flight in its entirety or any part thereof. You can view the action from multiple viewpoints, and save the encounter to disk. A "box" view (available only in VCR replay) shows you a tactical display of the entire "battlefield" in which each plane is represented by a dot moving in a three-dimensional box.

There is a mission creator that allows you to mix planes from differing eras a la the movie *Final Countdown*. After a rough day at the office it can be perversely rewarding to jump five or ten Me-109s with your F-86 Sabre. Unfortunately the mission creator only allows you to pick the enemy planes, the skill level of the AI opponents and the basic situation (i.e. you jump them, they jump you, etc.). You cannot recreate historical air engagements. You cannot have wingmen, you cannot dictate where the aircraft start in relation to each other, and you cannot have friendlies. If you select B-29s in your mission they will fire on you even if you are in an F-86! It's you against the world.

Iverson says he wanted a more detailed mission creator but time constraints prevented it. Before you begin to grumble, keep in mind **Lucasfilm Games**' *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*. That game has been delayed many times in order to add more features. Nonetheless, the lack of a full-blown mission creator is the biggest disappointment in *YAC*. If *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* does well in the marketplace, you can bet there will be a *YAC 2.0*, and Iverson says that a full-feature mission creator will be a high priority for that product.

## Debriefing

*Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* will be popular with both flight sim veterans and newcomers. Flight sim vets will appreciate the realistic feel and historical breadth while beginners will find the General a good tutor as they learn to take it to the enemy.

Remember what the General says: "Combat remains the ultimate flying experience". **cgw**

Russell Sipe is co-authoring *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat Handbook*: strategies for victory in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. The book will be the first release in the *Computer Gaming World Presents* book line published in conjunction with Prima Publishing. The book should be out in September.

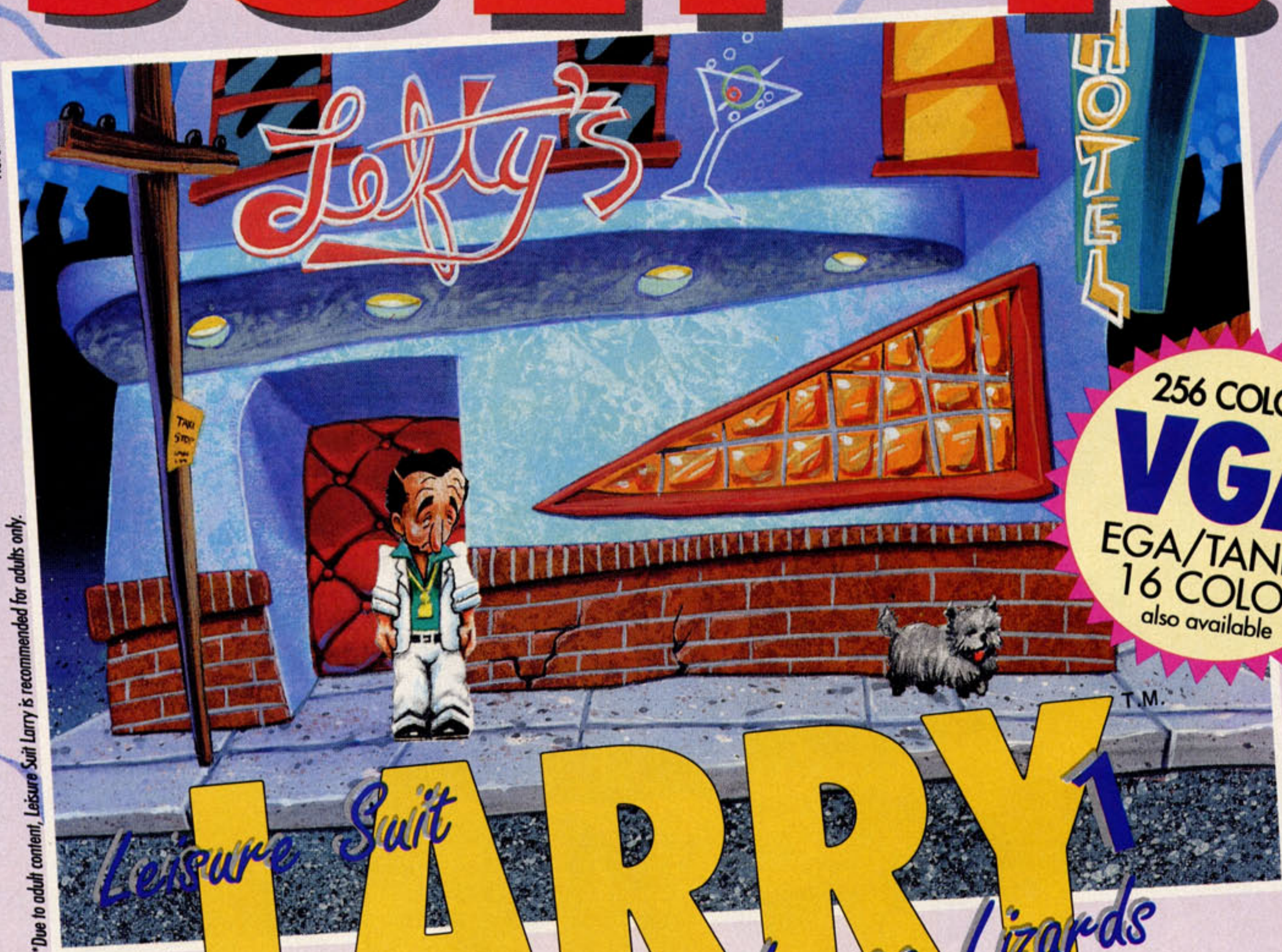
In addition, Electronic Arts has produced a video called *Yeager on Air Combat*. The suggested retail price is $16.95. It should be available in July.

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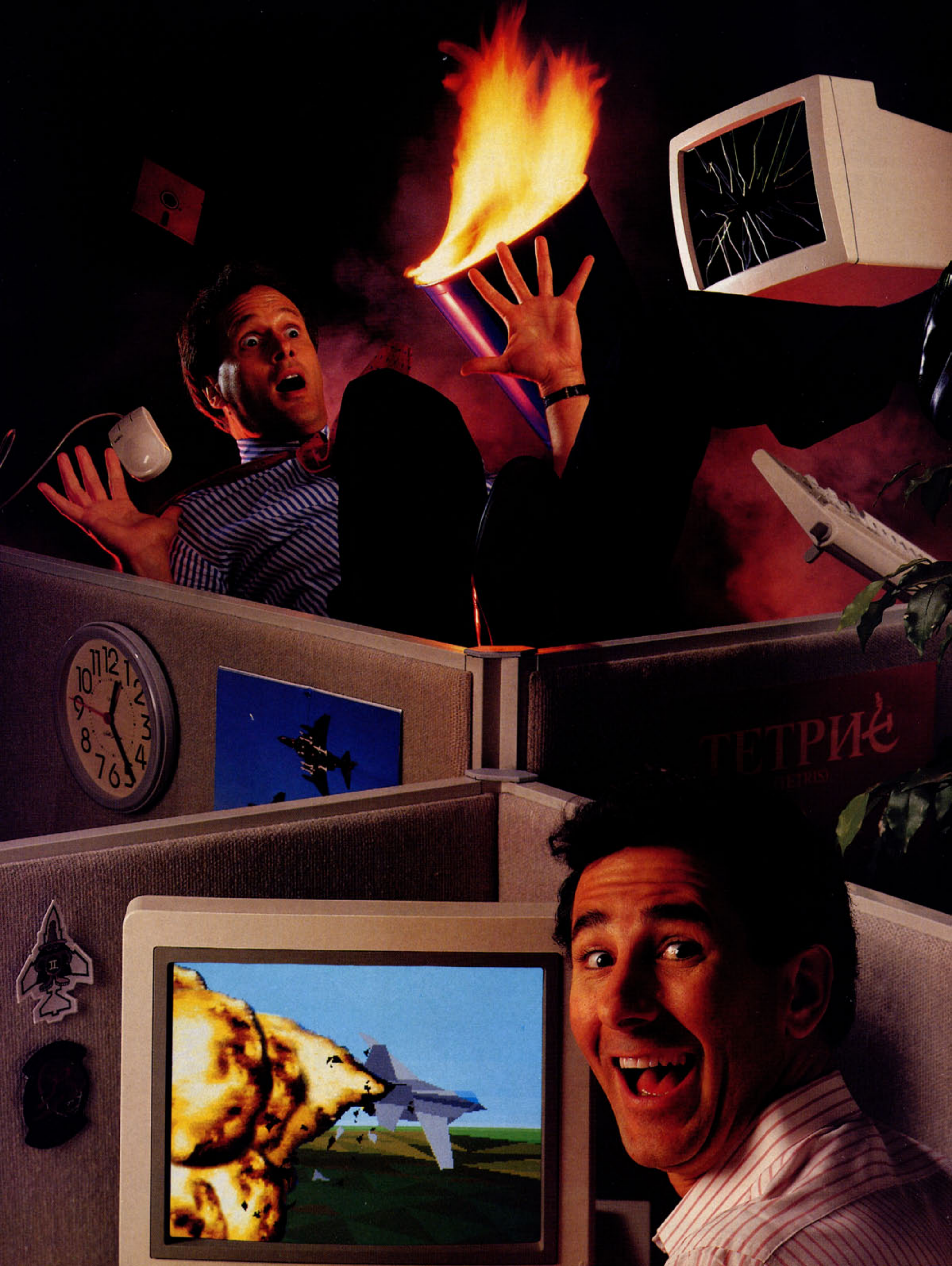
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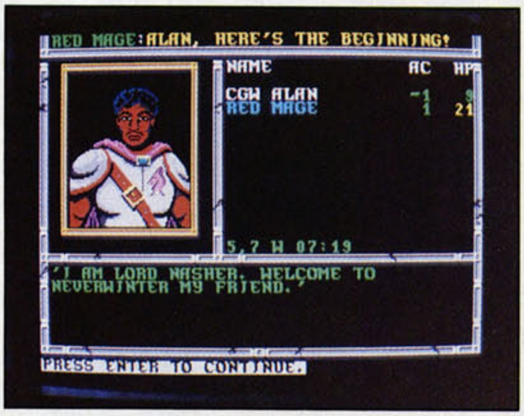

ТЕТРИС

# Minuet in (AD&D) Minor

## America On-Line's Neverwinter Nights

*by Alan Emrich*

While purists would argue that computer role-playing games (CRPGs) contain very little *actual* role-playing, games like *Wizardry*, *Might & Magic* and **SSI**'s *AD&D* line of games have all been highly successful in their own extremely popular niche. In these games, and others of their genre, players assemble a party of elite, hand-picked (or specially created) characters such that each character is a specialist in his/her field: fighter, cleric, magic-user, thief, bard, etc.




### Party of Six? Right This Way...

Thus, players would always be in lock-step with the system of "proper party management." The three "front line" characters would always be fighters, or some derivative thereof. As heroic peril fodder (or, alternately, monster chow), these would be the first to melee and would, naturally, receive the most damage in battle. Thus, one would expect them to have the most hit points and not be particularly reliant on missile weapons. In the rear would be the "wimpier" characters such as the thieves, clerics and magic users, who would contribute to the battles and other activities from their positions of relative safety. The phrase "SSDD" quickly came to mean, "Same Stuff, Different Dungeon."




Worst of all, there was no "role-playing". The single player at the keyboard was responsible for the thoughts and deeds of *every* character in the party so, naturally, every character behaved *exactly* as would best benefit the party's leadership. A few exceptions, such as *Wasteland*, threw in a few new twists, but characters generally never really spoke to each other, never really needed to trade a lot of items, never proffered wisecracks on the march or yelled for help in combat. CRPG characters had thus achieved the ultimate in two-dimensionality.




### Role-Playing Requires Multiple Humans

What if, though, a highly successful CRPG system, like **SSI**'s *AD&D* Gold Box series could be put on a telecommunications network, like **Quantum**'s *America On-Line*? What if each person could only control a *single* character in a game? What if players could communicate via a "chat" feature during play? What would happen? The answer: computer *role-playing*.



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## Discovering America (On-Line)

If none of this sounds particularly original, it isn't. Other networks have long had multi-human player adventure/role-playing games in their inventory. To the average "buys the box off the software shelf" computer gamer, news of these on-line role-playing games evoked little interest and a reaction of "so what?" Now that on-line role-playing is expanding the *AD&D* Gold Box universe, however, a keener interest can be sensed from these "off the shelf" computer role-playing gamers.

While several explorers "discovered" America before Christopher Columbus did in 1492, what made Chris so famous is that his discovery "stuck" and the continents were placed on the map and colonized by the "old world." Similarly, *Neverwinter Nights*, the latest *AD&D* Gold Box adventure in **SSI**'s hit series of *DragonLance* games, should put on-line role-playing on the map for all computer role-playing gamers. What Dan Bunten (*Modem Wars*, *Command HQ*) did to sell modems to computer strategy gamers, *Neverwinter Nights* will do to sell modems to computer role-playing gamers.

## There's Gold in That Thar Box!

Many people have called an *AD&D* license from TSR, Inc. "a license to print money." True enough, but that's not the only reason SSI's *AD&D* product line comes in a *gold* box. The gold also stands for *quality*. The on-line version is almost identical to SSI's classic Gold Box game system. Players who have generated characters, created and changed their icons, equipped, traded, mapped or fought within the *AD&D* Gold Box universe will not have to "unlearn" a thing before beginning play.

For those who've never delved into this system, perhaps a brief description is in order. The Gold Box line is pretty standard fare as most computer role-playing games go in many respects. Players generate a party of characters from fighters to magic users et. al., with each character having a list of attributes (rated on a 3-18 scale) such as intelligence and dexterity. They proceed to equip these characters with arms, armor and sundry other items prior to sallying forth into the towns, dungeons and wilderness confronting them. They slay monsters, accumulating gold and experience points and unraveling the game's greater puzzles in the process.

Where the Gold Box series is substantially different from the other fare of this genre is in its combat system. Each character sports its own combat icon, which is tactically maneuvered in an arena representing the actual dimensions of the party's present location. A character takes up a single "square" of space, while monsters take up one or more squares (depending on their size). Knowing by sight the ranges for missiles and blast radii for magic spells becomes a useful skill for experienced players. Although a bit time-consuming, the Gold Box combat system is one of its outstanding aspects and is something which this reviewer found generated a lot of spectator interest in his home (particularly with his 5-year old son on his lap saying "Get those monsters, Daddy!").

*(Continued on page 70)*

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## ADVENT. / ROLE PLAY

### PAST

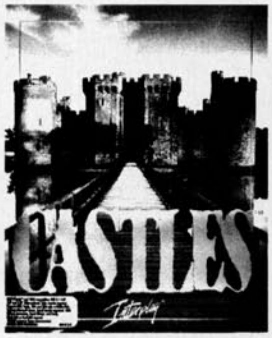
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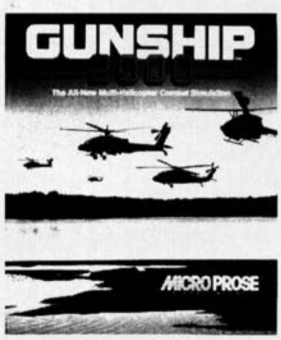
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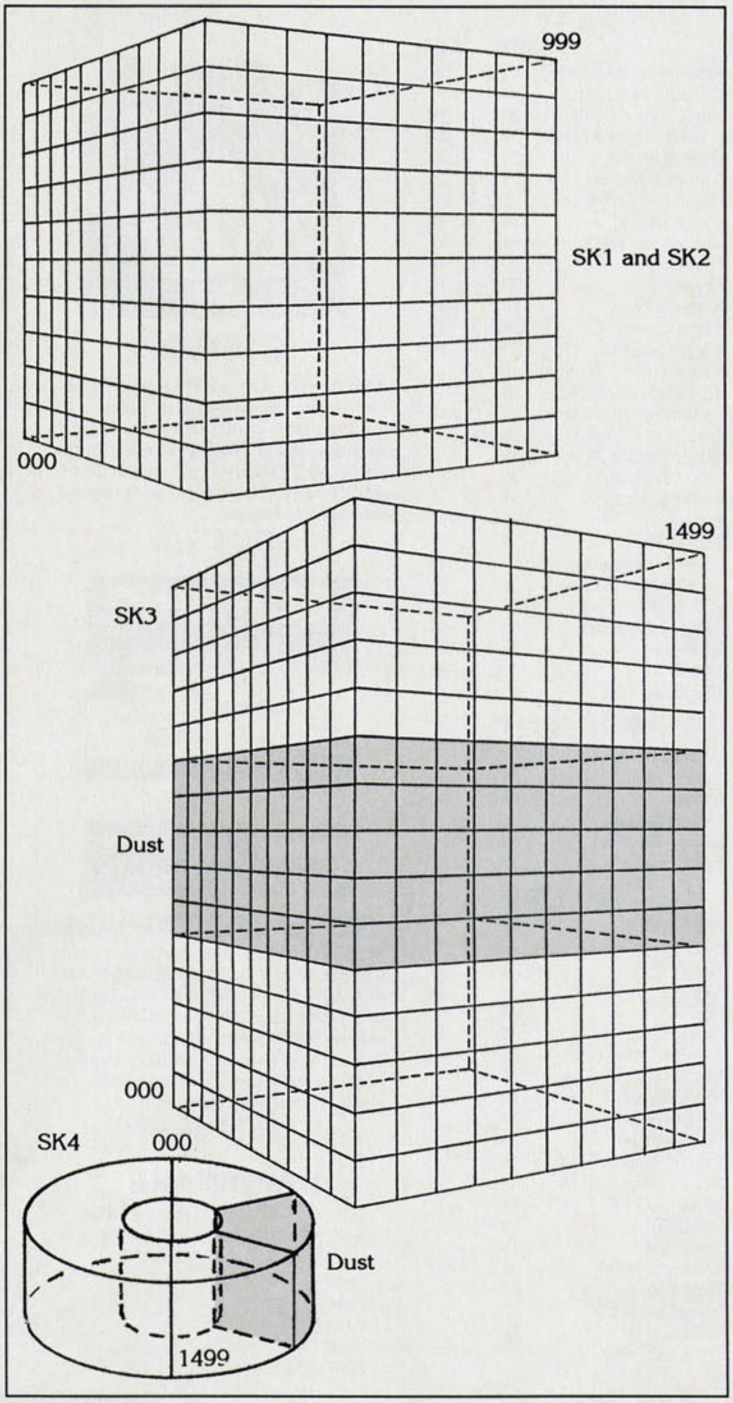
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| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Star-King |
| SYSTEM: | IBM |
| PRICE: | $39.95 |
| PLAYERS: | 1-7 |
| DESIGNER: | Walker Vanning |
| PUBLISHER: | Spacewar Simulation Company<br>1309 5th Avenue<br>San Rafael, CA 94901 |

# Stars in My Pocket

## Spacewar Simulations Company's Star-King

by Dave Arneson




*Star-King* is very similar to a three-dimensional version of a large-scale *Battleship*. Those who remember the classic **Milton Bradley** game in which the player guesses the coordinates of the opponent's ships in order to hit them (and eventually, sink them) will understand the basics of *Star-King*. Of course, *Star-King* features a much grander scale. The "strategic display" in games #1 and #2 shows ten grids of 100 squares each, making for 1,000 playing cubes. Each turn, the player is allowed to build ships and colonies, following this by moving ships around the playing grids. Game #3 has a 15x10x10 (1,500 cubes) grid with levels 5-9 containing "dust," so that sighting is reduced to a single square. Game #4 is a 30x10x10 (3,000-cube) torus (wheel), again with five levels of dust (#5-9) to obscure one's "sight." The only other "terrain" squares are black holes. Squares containing black holes can be passed through, but may not be the ship's actual destination.

One intriguing aspect of this game is the multi-player capacity; up to seven players can compete at a time. Another positive feature is that *Star-King* is quite short and can be finished in one to two hours. Unfortunately, there are many faults in the game, as well. These cause the game to compare poorly with earlier games of the same type. The graphics are virtually non-existent, playability is limited and there is very little tactical depth.

In terms of screen graphics, sounds and animation, what one sees on the title page is what one gets. With a monochrome monitor, it takes very little memory (85k) to copy the entire game to a hard disk. This is quite a contrast to the huge games so common today. Even so, the game includes the "fake worksheet" option for those who play at work and the "decoy display" to fool one's less-than-honorable opponents who might stoop to looking over one's shoulder during the course of a game.

The first design problem that one encounters is serious. It is impossible to exit from the game and there is no save game feature! The only way out is to reset the entire thing and start from scratch. This is annoying at best.

The second major problem is the poor display of the tactical information. There are no intelligence screens regarding coordinate positions of the player's ships or of his planets. What *is* displayed is a row of numbers with a statement listing the order that the information is displayed. It should have been quite easy to make a simple statement line with variable inclusions or, at least, a column head format to make those displays easier for the player to grasp. When added to the fact that the coordinate system does not lend itself to easy comprehension, the result is a *very* confusing picture for the beginning player.

The reviewer could go on but, frankly, it is not worth the effort. This game looks like a first effort at a computer game design. It certainly has the look of public domain rather than professional software written all over it.

This game *could* be fun once the player becomes familiar with its information displays and coordinate movement system. This would give the player a *Risk!*-type "beer and pretzels" game.

For the same enjoyment, and less effort, one could play **Avalon Hill**'s *Galaxy* on an old Apple II. By comparison, *Star-King* lacks the user-friendly features, entertaining sound effects, crude animation (in the results phases) and a fairly exciting play system for multi-player action that *Galaxy* had over ten years ago. When one considers that *Galaxy* was even written for a 30K machine, that makes *Star-King* a solid miss in this market, unless one simply must have a multi-player modem game with a steep learning curve. **CGW**

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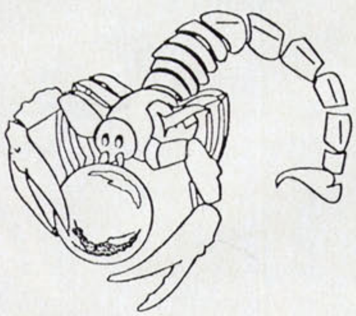


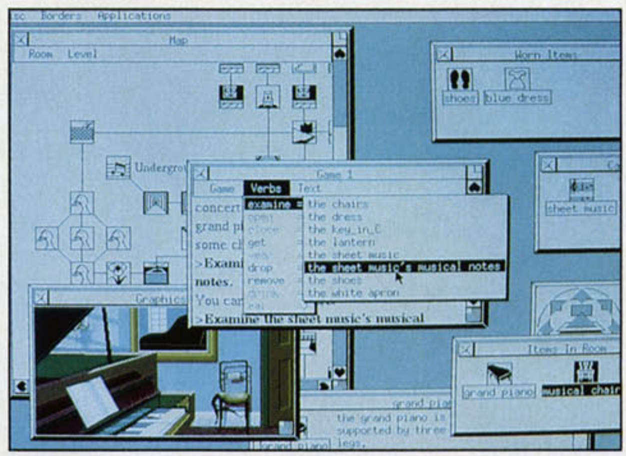

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# Scorpion's View



## Magnetic Scrolls' Wonderland





*Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.*

Once again, it is time to peer into the magic crystal. It's amazing what you can see inside a glass ball (well, *you* can't, but *I* can!). For instance, shimmering into view right now is... is... a bunch of rabbit tracks???

*Wonderland*, as you can probably tell from the name, is based on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. There haven't been many games with this theme; the only other one I can recall came out some years ago from *Wyndham Classics* and was a fully graphic version. *Wonderland*, however, is text plus graphics, somewhat in the style of *Spellcasting 101*, but with one of the slickest interfaces I have seen in a while.

It also has one of the most thorough installation routines of any game. You can install to a hard drive, of course, but if you happen not to have one or prefer not to eat up space on your hard disk, you can put the game on floppies, instead. You can use double density, high density, 5.25, 3.5, or almost any combination of these (ie, part of the game on 5.25 and part on 3.5). The only thing you can't do is install partly to hard drive and partly to floppy.

The installation routine automatically checks the speed of your machine; if it is deemed too slow, the graphics will be disabled when you play (this can be overridden, but the instructions recommend against override). Also examined is the amount of free RAM you have (500K minimum is recommended); if RAM is too low, you will be advised and the installation will not continue.

If you are using a hard drive, you can have the graphics decompressed onto the disk. This will speed up access time during play and is worth doing if you have the space. The install program will look at that, too, and let you know whether or not your drive has room for the decompressed graphics.

Finally, it will ask if you want sound for your music card (AdLib or Roland only — however, SoundBlaster worked very well when I specified AdLib). Note that if you are using an actual AdLib card, you will have to disable the drivers if you boot with them because the game has its own drivers.

Once you've done all that and the game is installed, you're ready to play. There are basically two ways of doing this, using a mouse (or joystick) and using the keyboard. *Wonderland* is very mouse-oriented because of its heavy reliance on its own custom windowing system, but you can do the entire game with a keyboard only if you have no mouse or joystick.

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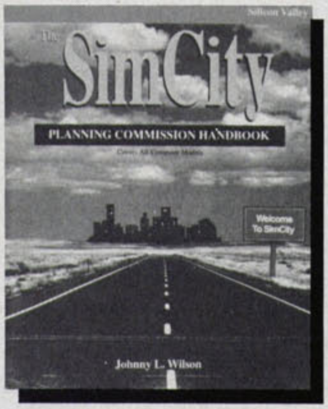

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Actual IBM EGA screen photos

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There are a number of different windows you can call up, and they make play much easier, eliminating a lot of the drudgery often associated with adventure games. First is the map. You can call up a map utility that fits into about the bottom third of the screen. It creates itself as you go along. Since the Wonderland area is somewhat larger than a third of the screen, the map has scroll bars at the side and bottom, so you can move the display around to see more of it. Many areas of the map are also labeled, which can be quite helpful.

What makes this even neater is the ability to "go to" pretty much any place you've already visited. You can be standing at the White Rabbit's house, type in "go to the Palace"... and off you go! No need for laborious "s,s,w,sw,n" directions. Better yet, you can click with the mouse on almost any map location and go to it that way.

I recommend using the map click, as sometimes the "go to somewhere" doesn't quite work the way it should. One time, I typed in "Go to the Duchess's House" and somehow ended up at the palace instead. Then I tried "Go to the Duchess" and that worked all too well. The game marched me right to her house, through the door and into the kitchen, where I was beaned by the cook. It was "painful!" It also put an end to the game. So do be careful with those "go to" commands.



Another handy window is the compass, which sits in the lower right corner of the screen. This shows you the ways you can move (eight compass directions, plus up and down), by darkening the appropriate arrows. Clicking on one of them will move you in that direction.

A very helpful window is "Items in Room" (there is also one for the inventory you carry, but it's not as useful as this one). Every time you enter a location, any objects of possible interest are displayed in a long window on the right hand side, above the compass. Then you need merely click on them to examine them, search them, get them, etc.

This really saves fingerwork on the keyboard, as you don't have to go through the "examine X," "examine Y," "examine Z" routine all the time. You can still use

the keyboard to look at things manually, but why make extra work for yourself when it's not necessary?

Further, if you have the graphics mode on, you can move the cursor around the picture itself, clicking on individual objects as you would in the "Items" window and operating them in the same way. I preferred using the "Items in Room" myself, as there was no guesswork involved as to what might or might not be important and I could be sure of not missing something inadvertently.

Speaking of the graphics window, this can be either half-size or "standard." I recommend half, since (a) the graphics look much better and (b) it doesn't block out as much of the text. The picture window can be moved around, and I generally had it up in the top middle of the text area, to keep as much of the text in sight as possible.

The graphics are quite nice, and there is one for virtually every location in the adventure. They come in fairly quickly (at least on a 386) as you move from spot to spot, and add a nice touch to the game.



On occasion, there are some animated graphics (most are still pictures). These take up a tremendous amount of RAM, and you will have to close down most or all of any other windows you have open at the time. I had that problem when I arrived at the Duchess's house. The animation of the fish footman delivering the invitation to the frog footman required shutting all the other windows that were open at that moment. You may want to turn animation off to avoid this if you plan on having several windows open throughout the game.

Saving and restoring are simple matters, and as you can specify drives and directories, the number of save positions is limited only by the amount of space available on your drive. This feature is particularly good if more than one person is playing the game; each can have his/her own separate directory.

I don't anticipate getting many letters for help with this one, as pretty much all the answers to the puzzles are in the game itself. Yes, following in the tradition of the later **Infocom** games, *Wonderland* contains on-line hints/solutions to the problems.

This has both good points and drawbacks. On the one hand, no matter what, you're assured of being able to finish the game. However difficult or involved the puzzle, help is easily obtained. Further, the clues are graduated, so you needn't see the answer right off; you can build up to it, reading as many hints as you

need (they become progressively more blatant until the solution is spelled out for you). You also don't have to shell out extra money to purchase a separate hint book (a big plus for many people).

On the other hand, with the solutions so easy to see, there is a great temptation to look after you've been stuck on a puzzle for only a short time. Unlike the Infocom series, there is no way to "turn off" the hint mode. You need a fair amount of self-control to avoid clicking on "Help" when you've hit a brick wall, or you may find yourself finishing the game all too quickly.

The parser is fairly sophisticated and capable of handling complicated actions. After all, there will be times when you want to do more with objects than merely examine them or pick them up. This is where keyboard input becomes superior to mouse clicking and provides a natural complement to the simpler actions. *Wonderland* blends the two very well.

While the game is based on *Alice In Wonderland*, it does not follow the actual plot of the book. Some individual sections (such as the Queen's croquet party and the trial for the theft of the tarts) do appear, but the story itself is unique to the game. So reading the book won't be of much help in playing. However, you might want to read it before you play, to put yourself in the proper mood.

Translating a flight of fancy into a computer game is a delicate business, especially when dealing with a children's story (however much adults may also appreciate it!). Fortunately, the team at **Magnetic Scrolls** has done a good job here, managing to retain much of the atmosphere, style and sense of humor of the original.

Since everything takes place in a dream, Alice never dies. If something unpleasant happens (like being conked by the cook), Alice merely wakes up prematurely and is taken home by her sister. At that point, you can either quit or restore.

If there is one weak point, it is the manual, which at first glance can be rather overwhelming. This is due more to the wide variety of options available than anything else. The best way to handle this is skim through it for the basics, then refer back to the manual while you play around with the different settings. I found it to be much clearer that way, rather than trying to absorb everything at once.

Considered purely as an adventure game, the puzzles are easy to middling, with a couple that are, perhaps, over-detailed (the teapot business and the nest come to mind here). Considered as an adaptation of *Alice*, it is a satisfying romp through Wonderland, simple puzzles or no. It's also a good introduction for those who have never read the book. (It's not every day you get the chance to play croquet with a flamingo mallet and a hedgehog ball!)

Overall, this is a good game to choose, especially if you're looking for something to while away a few lazy summer afternoons, or want an adventure you can play with the kids. It's worth getting for the technical achievements alone (and that's not something I say very often!). Fortunately, the game has more than bells and whistles and, very simply, it's fun stuff to play.

And so the crystal clouds over for this session. **CGW**

# Piling It On

by Allen Greenberg

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Pick 'N Pile |
| SYSTEMS: | Amiga, Atari, IBM |
| REVIEWED: | Amiga |
| COPY PROTECT: | None |
| PRICE: | $39.95 |
| PUBLISHER: | UBI Soft<br>c/o Electronic Arts<br>San Mateo, CA |

The degree to which an arcade game intrudes on everyday life may be helpful in judging just how enjoyable and how habituating that game may be. Just ask a *Tetris* addict who is unable to so much as drive by a billboard without attempting to mentally rotate it and fit it in between two buildings. This reviewer has recently redecorated his house with popsicle-stick bridges, just in case any *Lemmings* are about who need some help in getting from one piece of furniture to the next. Indeed, what videophile can deny the sheer terror experienced during a heavy rain storm, while listening to the imagined toe-tapping rhythm of happy *Space Invaders* dancing on the roof? Now, *Pick 'n Pile*, a recent arcade offering from **UbiSoft**, will shake up the lives of players who frequently stack dishes or other breakable objects, and live in fear of hearing a nerve-shattering crash.

Just such a crash (not a software crash!) occurs in *Pick 'n Pile* at the beginning of each round when a collection of colored balls, blocks and a few other assorted items are released from the top of the screen. The objects crash to the ground and collide with each other with such a great impact that many explode. When the digitized dust has settled, the player must go to work stacking and organizing the surviving pieces. Points are earned for creating a column of spheres which are the same color. When this happens the column disappears, other objects on the screen get shifted around, more objects explode and the player is treated to a few more crashes. The round is successfully completed when all of the colored orbs are gone within the time limit.

It is up to the player to develop strategies for gathering as many like-colored balls as possible in one column. This is challenging in that it takes only two of them to make the column disappear. There are extra points to be earned for making tall columns, as well as including certain other objects to be found on the screen in these columns. These include bonus-point blocks, score-multiplying blocks and time-limit extenders.

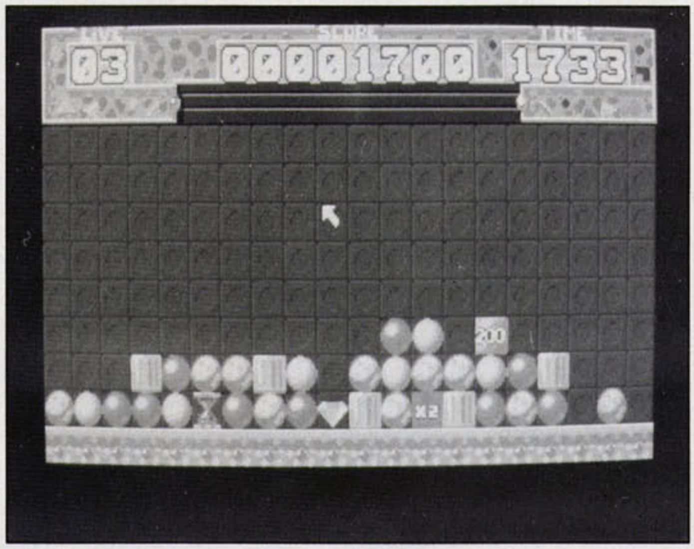
Advancing though the game's many levels, the player will have to contend with the inclusion of less desirable objects on the screen, like bonfires and "death-heads" that eat away the round's time limit. With each succeeding level comes both a greater number and a greater variety of objects on the screen — as well as, of course, more of those wonderfully nerve-grinding crashes.

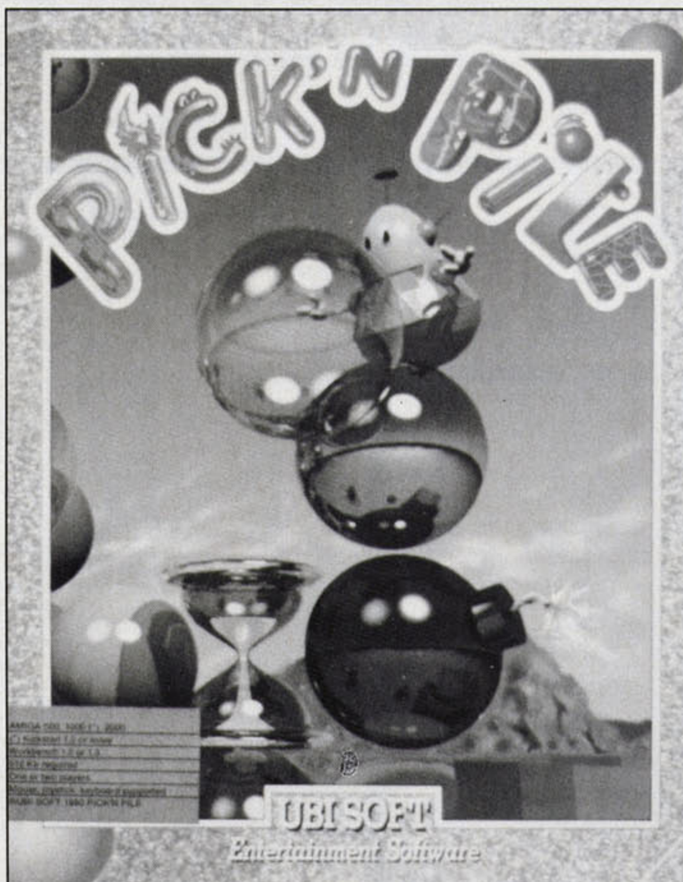
Manipulation of the objects on screen may be done with keyboard, joystick or mouse. Of the three, most players will probably prefer the mouse. Those who choose the keyboard or joystick, however, will be able to customize the performance of those devices. Placing the cursor and clicking on two different objects will cause those objects to trade places. Most objects can also be moved by clicking on the object and an empty space. Certain objects can only be moved by trading places with another.

Graphically, *Pick 'n Pile* is quite colorful. However, there is very little detail or shading to lift the objects from their two-dimensional background. Unfortunately, the game falls somewhat behind state of the art in this department.

The sounds produced by *Pick 'n Pile* show quite a bit of imagination. Game play is accompanied by the mechanical tick-tick-ticking of an old wind-up clock which speeds up as the time limit approaches. The many crashes resemble an equally old hand-cranked cash register which aches from overuse. The successful completion of a round entitles the player to a brief excerpt from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* as performed by an ice-cream truck. The cataclysmic noise following an unsuccessful round, however, is enough to send any collector of fine china shrieking in terror.

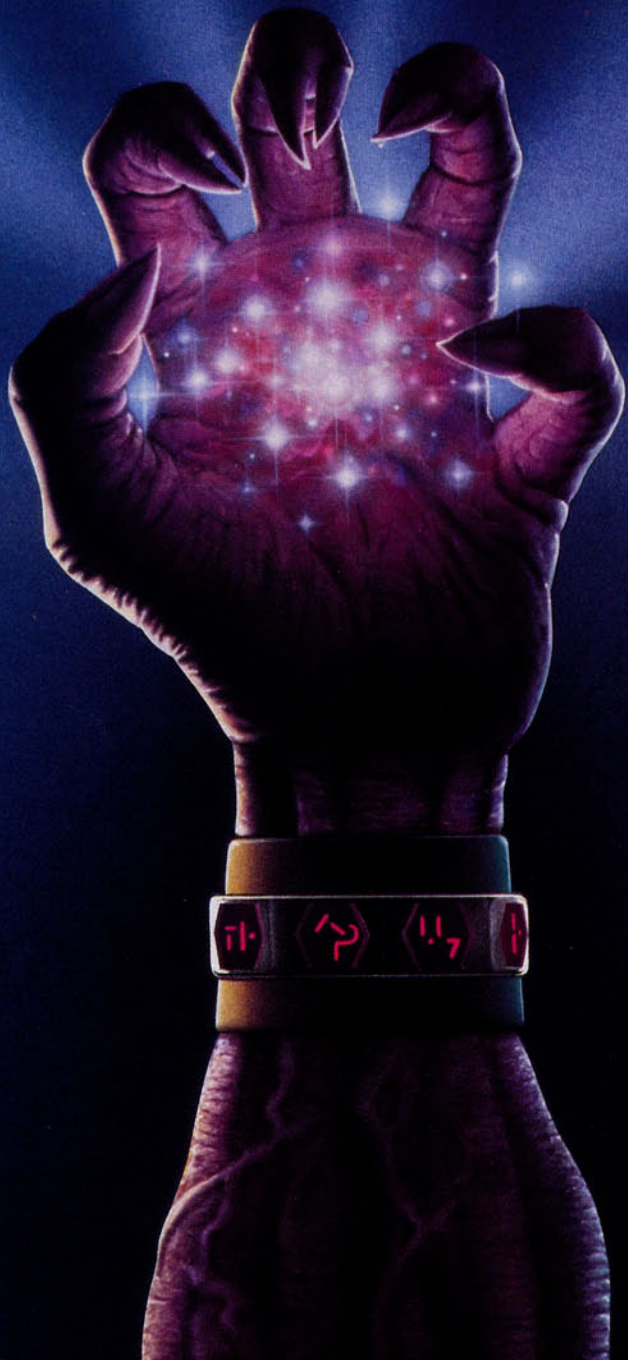
*Pick 'n Pile* will probably never reach the obsessive heights enjoyed by *Tetris* or *Lemmings*. However, it has an original flavor and charm to it which should earn it a following. For those who enjoy fast-moving, non-shoot-'em-up arcade exercises, *Pick 'n Pile* is worth checking out. **CGW**



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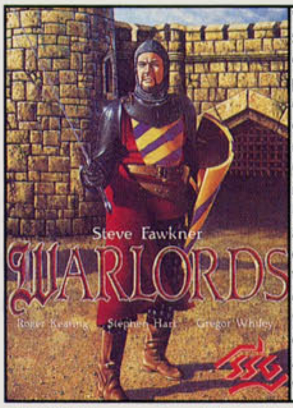
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**'WARLORDS' from STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP** is a huge eight player strategy game of empires and armies, castles and heroes, monsters and dragons. Capture cities to increase production. Use your heroes to form alliances. Improve castles and garrison troops to defend your empire. Lay siege to your enemies' castles to destroy his armies. Ambush his heroes to destroy leadership. **$29**

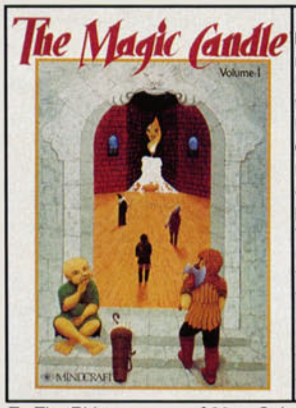
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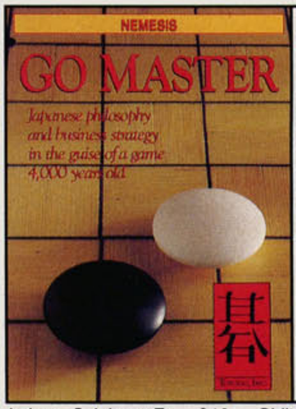


**'WORLDS AT WAR' by Lyric Software** is a game of naval combat on a galactic scale. Simple in concept, you can play the tactical study for an hour; or the campaign game for a weekend. Features include random map generation, hidden movemnet, design your own task forces, capture palnets to build more units. **CGW** said "...like **EMPIRE**, what this game has is play-value". **$30**

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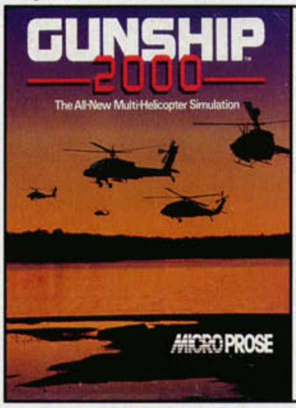
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**'GUNSHIP 2000' from MICROPROSE** is a multi helicopter combat simulation. You control five copters on hundreds of combat missions in the Persian Gulf & Central Europe. On each mission choose amongst the Apache, Longbow, Cobra, Kiowa Warrior, Blackhawk, Comanche, or Defender. Call in air & artillery support. A campaign game and a mission designer are included. **$39**

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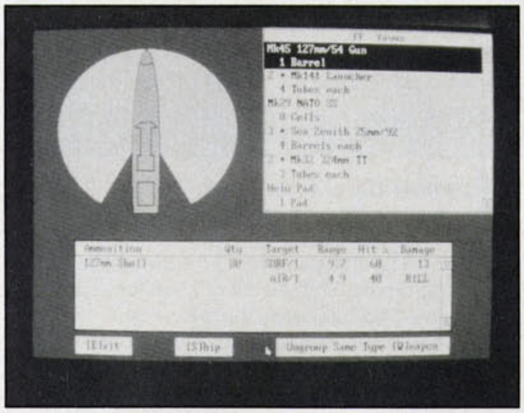
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# *Harpoon*: The Blue Side

## or How to Make Sure the Pointy End Is Facing the Opponent

by James M. Lowerre



In early 1990, this reviewer, searching to broaden his wargaming horizons, elected to investigate an area unfamiliar to him: modern naval conflict. The February 1990 issue of *Computer Gaming World* decided for him that the game would be *Harpoon*, and soon another Tandy was launched into **Three-Sixty**'s electronic ocean.

While prowling the GIUK gap, elementary- to graduate-level lessons in modern naval warfare began to evolve. After digesting *Battle Set 1*, the other Battle Sets and the *Scenario Editor* became mandatory continuing education. Being the result of a quest for knowledge of modern naval matters, this article is designed to assist simulation sailors in getting their sea legs under them and to reduce the price of admiralty as they pursue victory at sea.

Absorbing the tactics and techniques concerning the successful employment of modern naval sub, surface and air platforms along with all their associated weapons is akin to eating an elephant with a pen knife and a shrimp fork: One has to take it one bite at a time. The discussion following is of tactics and techniques useful in the employment of the different types of platforms. Material previously covered by the esteemed M. Evan Brooks in both the February and April 1990 *CGW* issues will not be repeated.

### Using Basic Platform Information

The first order of the day is to learn, or at least have available, information on the military attributes of the platforms on both sides (or all sides in *Battle Set 3*). A series of tables is useful for units operating in each type of environment. These tables include fixed-wing AEW (Airborne Early Warning); fighter; attack/strike; bomber; ASW (Anti-Submarine Warfare); EW (Electronic Warfare); helicopter (AEW/Search, ASW); and surface vessels, including CV (carrier), BB (battleship), CG (guided missile cruiser), DD (destroyer), FF (frigate), missile boats, commercial ships and submarines (attack and missile).

At the start of any scenario, use the platforms display option from the reports menu to list all classes. Then, while viewing each individual platform, the following information should be recorded: type, class, sensor ranges — air, surface and sonar (with a T for towed if appropriate), quantities and ranges of air, surface and submarine weapons (including the ranges and quantities of secondary weapons used for the platform's primary role), maximum speed and range, as well as nationality. Admittedly, this takes a little time, but the value of the familiarity with platform and weapon characteristics provided will contribute significantly to future success. This is also the cheap man's alternative to buying the board game for the platform data tables alone.

A partial example of this do-it-yourself platform data table from *Battle Set 3* is in Figure A.

### How to Come Up with a Plan

Pay careful attention to the mission and the victory conditions given in the scenario brief. The scenario victory conditions (frequently referred to as the described end state by military officials) are the military objectives. As soon as the scenario comes up on the screen, save it and then put it on pause at the lowest group window magnification that will allow viewing all friendly and known enemy forces.

Click through all enemy bases and known groups, noting the numbers and types of enemy ships and planes present. Look at the geography of the region in relation to the relative positions and distances of enemy and friendly forces. Examine the characteristics of friendly and known enemy platforms.

Use the available information on the relative positions of enemy and friendly forces to determine the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. Obviously, the ideal plan uses the player's strengths against the enemy's weaknesses. Such strengths *may* include taking immediate advantage of the starting situation. In such a case, the player should reload the scenario *after* developing a plan to accomplish the objective(s). If the initial plan doesn't work, one should come up

with another one (nobody's counting!), since the experience prepares one for more complex scenarios.

## Collecting Tactical Information

As each new enemy group is identified, click to that group and use the unit window to identify the platform type and its locations within the formation. Then check the characteristics of any "new" platforms. Use this information to decide the direction to attack with friendly aircraft and/or missiles. Maintain contact with the new group until it can be engaged. If contact is lost, one must expend resources to regain it (without forgetting that the enemy group is still out there).

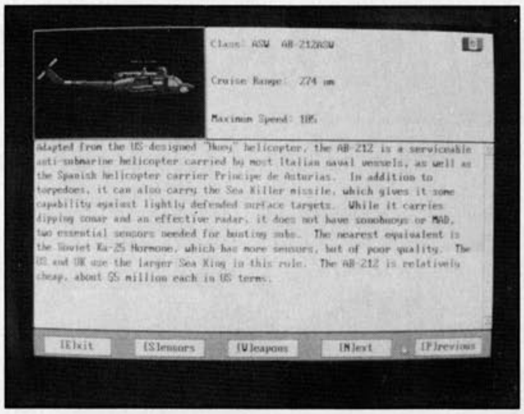
Although AEW aircraft are best suited to finding and continuously monitoring enemy groups, other aircraft can be used for this task. Long-range fighters, loitering just out of air defense range at high altitude with sensors on, are good for maintaining contact with enemy surface groups. If enemy fighters are not an immediate threat, ASW aircraft can perform this function.

Players who do not have local air superiority around their surface groups will soon discover that using their air search radars is far superior to the alternative of identifying approaching enemy air groups by watching them attack one's own ships. Thus, since most modern strike aircraft cruise at speeds around 10 knots per minute and, at a Vlow altitude, can approach to within 12nm (nautical miles) of a surface target, smart commanders should set an interval of no more than three minutes between intermittent searches. Once a commander's ship has been spotted, however, it's time to leave the radars on.

Another way to avoid surprise attack is to routinely check enemy bases for decreases in the number of aircraft listed. The types and numbers that are missing will very likely be headed directly toward the player's fleet.

After striking enemy targets, click to the target and get a full report to determine the amount and type of damage done by the attack. Think of it as *Harpoon*'s version of "battle damage assessment."

Finally, use the range circles to determine maximum sensor and weapon ranges for enemy groups. The sheer number of circles can be confusing at first, but the information they provide is vital to all decisions.




## Preventing the Red "Fly By" or "Fly By" the Reds

The computer can provide auto-formation air cover. This reviewer's advice — just say "No!" Instead, the wise commander micromanages his/her air assets, launching AEW and fighter patrols to the exact positions desired and launching attack/strike missions to a specific patrol location so that when they arrive on station, one can make the final decision on when and how to attack the target. One can even assign helicopters to cover specific ASW zones by using the formation editor.

Use a simple sequence to attack surface targets (call it the "Eyeball 'em, Swat 'em, Poke 'em and Pound 'em sequence," or "ESPP" for short). First, the target needs to be identified and sensor coverage achieved and maintained (AEW task). Next, the local airspace over and around the target (at least to the outer limit of the enemy air defenses) must be secured (fighters). Next, poke out the enemy's eyes by attacking with anti-radar missiles (attack/strike/bombers). This prepares the target so one can bombard it with relative impunity (attack/strike/bombers).

**"In war everything is simple, and everything is difficult." — von Clausewitz**

Remember Von Clausewitz: "In war everything is simple, and everything is difficult." This is as true at sea as it ever was on land. The effects of friction on friendly operations, especially attempts to synchronize multi-group attacks, should never be discounted. This is the bottom line for micromanaging air assets.

Don't mix aircraft types, with the exception of EW aircraft necessary to penetrate enemy air defenses. Match the EW aircraft with the type of attack/strike aircraft they are to accompany (i.e., EA-6 and A-6B). An ESPP 'package' will require several different types of aircraft but each type should be launched in its own group(s). Mixing only places artificial restraints on the more capable aircraft, may needlessly expose some aircraft to enemy air defenses and presents a larger than necessary sensor image.

Supersonic aircraft can counter enemy air-to-air missiles fired at range by running out of range at max speed and high altitude.

Aircraft mission range is calculated from the original launch point. When a group reaches the bingo fuel point (the point at which one has only enough fuel to return to his base of origin) and a location closer to the group than the take-off point is available, the group can exceed its bingo fuel limit and still land safely at the closer landing point. Unfortunately, the player can't tell how much additional range the new landing point adds to the group's limit. One won't know what the group has remaining until the group actually arrives at the landing field. At that time, the remaining mission range will be briefly displayed just before the group completes landing.

AEW Aircraft — Airborne Early Warning will not happen if the aircraft aren't properly positioned. The requirement is to know about the enemy threat in time to neutralize it. Anything else is too late. These aircraft should be the first to launch at the beginning of any scenario.

Bomber Operations — See attack/strike aircraft. Local air superiority is essential for successful employment of bombers.

ASW Operations — ASW work is like preventative medicine in which the ASW aircraft are the doctors. It is always desirable to sink or drive off a submarine before it attacks a target. However, one should not forget that Magnetic Anomaly Detection (MAD) devices locate enemy submarines *only* when at low altitude.

It is extremely useful to combine these aircraft with otherwise defenseless convoys, as well as to patrol geographically restricted areas. One can even protect unescorted convoys with land-based ASW aircraft. Use the formation editor to join the two groups. Assign the plane a multi-sector patrol around the surface group, making the patrol ring coincide with the maximum enemy torpedo range plus and minus 2nm. Then, use the staff reminder to split the aircraft out of the protected group before it reaches bingo

fuel (or watch the mission range circle on a like aircraft launched at the same or an earlier time as the one(s) joined with the surface group).

ASW Techniques — In case of an undetected attack, one should triangulate upon the direction from where the attack came. Then one needs to fly to that point as soon as possible. Performing an outward spiral at low altitude, one should cover the area the sub could have moved in *since* the attack.

Prosecuting a sub contact — the flush 'em and rush 'em technique does just that. Move immediately to the center of the contact and drop one torpedo. Wait for the sub to take evasive action. When he does, move directly over him and deliver a *coup de grace* in the form of a final torpedo. Plan on using four torpedoes against any one sub contact to allow for the sub commander's skill and/or luck.

Helicopter Aircraft — AEW/Search Helicopters Operations. Remember what early warning means and patrol at highest (medium) altitude. Don't put these aircraft out front in a hostile air environment. Hold them as a separate patrol above the center of the surface formation. In this position, the helicopter doubles the effective range of the group's surface radars. Use the surface group's air defenses to protect the helicopter. At the first sign of enemy fighters, the helicopter should drop to Vlow altitude and hover inside the friendly formation.

## ASW Helicopter Operations

Use those with sonar for formation ASW patrols. Assign no more than half the sonar-equipped helicopters to ASW patrols to ensure continuous coverage. Hold non-sonar-equipped helicopters for prosecuting contacts.

If operating in a hostile air environment, the patrolling ASW helicopters should be kept in the formation AAW ring or center. Above all, always assign four torpedoes to each sub contact.

## Staying Afloat, So the Other Guy Won't

Scenario start — Check out all formations and group courses. Adapt the formations to the threat and the group courses to the plan. A surface group's course should generally zig-zag along a given travel path.

Formation editor — Formation orientation remains constant. Readapt the formation to any major change in the group's




general direction of travel. Concentrate ASW patrols along the group's general line of advance. Air defense vessels should be between the formation's "mission essential" vessels and air-to-surface threat(s). Remember what Sun Tsu said: "He who tries to defend everything, defends nothing." Concentrate on the threat.

Maneuver individual ships using the formation editor, especially when under attack. Assigning a unit a new location causes the unit to go immediately to max speed and head directly for the new position. For example, part of a group's reaction to a long-range missile attack would be to go max speed on a course directly away from the incoming missiles. At the same time, the air defense vessels would be repositioning in depth at the rear of the formation.

Group speed will automatically drop to half of the group's maximum when making a formation change. This allows vessels to quickly reposition, but can be overridden when necessary. Use the unit window to determine when the group is in its new formation.

Carrier Groups — Many scenarios revolve around the ability of one side or the other to defend a carrier group. In such a case, the group's first and foremost priority is to protect the carrier. If enemy air is a threat, then all air-to-air-capable aircraft should be given that mission. Check formation when an air threat is identified. If the CAP (Combat Air Patrol) fails, the threat can get within 12nm.

A need for speed coupled with an enemy submarine threat presents the opportunity to split off a decoy group. A decoy group consists of one of the carrier's cruiser escorts and one or two smaller escorts. The decoy group moves at high speed along the carrier group's intended path; the carrier group follows. One will be amazed at what pops up along the way to attack the decoy group.

The carrier group's second priority is to air-deliver ESPP-type attacks against surface targets.

Battleship Group — The 32 Tomahawk missiles of the battleship alone are good for the destruction of one or two small enemy bases. A battleship group without adequate air cover is no fun. Without adequate air cover, the group is also more vulnerable to submarine attack (helicopters are forced to operate close in).

ASW Group — Check the unit sonar ranges and ASW weapons ranges in the unit window before assigning positions in a formation. Helicopters, not ships, prosecute submarine contacts. Set the group's patrol course to zig-zag. Speed should be low (less than 19 knots) to prevent interference with the group's passive sonars and to limit the group's hydrophonic signature. One will find that the best sonar range is achieved at creep speed.

Turn air search radars on and enemy air (including long-range missile) attacks should be detected in time to react.

Missile Boats — With air superiority, substitute these boats for aircraft in the "pound 'em" phase of an ESPP attack. The unit's very high speed makes them nearly invulnerable to torpedo attack.

Unarmed Convoys — Astute players will set their course to frequently zig-zag and their speed to minimize the convoy's hydrophonic signature (something less than 19 knots, since different surface vessels have differing hydrophonic signatures, but most begin the noisy propeller cavitation at speeds above 18 knots).

Use a special formation. Make a large center circle (8 to 12nm in diameter). Place the least valuable vessel at the forward edge of the circle. Place all other vessels at the opposite side. Enemy submarines will hear the lead vessel and (hopefully) be decoyed into solely attacking the sacrificial vessel.

Note the direction of incoming weapons during the attack animation. Direct ASW groups back down the attack track. Split damaged vessels (speed impaired) away from the convoy (they're noisier). If the direction of attack is missed, the player should set the convoy speed to zero. Then the ASW groups can try to locate the attacker. After 30 to 60 minutes of ASW searches, one should resume creep speed and set the convoy's course to swing wide of the attack area by a distance in excess of the enemy's maximum detection range.

## Staying Alive "Down Under" (Submarines)

Submarines in general — At the start of each scenario, do a "crazy Ivan" maneuver. This is a 90-degree turn to "look back into the baffles" of the submarine's track. It is always surprising to see what one finds upon looking.

Even though some submarines can "creep" at up to 19 knots (Sea Wolf), the passive sonars are most effective at a speed of about five knots. Avoid enemy SOSUS sensors (like around the Kola peninsula) by traveling at shallow depth and creep speed.

Contrary to M. Evan Brooks' assertion, sub speed can be set to zero. Move the set course point indicator to the zero point and give a zero speed command, then wait for a minute of game time.

Attack enemy surface groups with torpedoes. The torpedo is very destructive, has a high probability of hitting and may not immediately compromise the attacker's location. Some torpedoes outrange shipboard anti-submarine weapons.

Know the characteristics of your torpedoes. Range and speed are the key, especially since many targets can outrun a torpedo fired at long range.

When engaging a target with torpedoes, fire single torpedoes in two or three separate attacks. Use at least two torpedoes against an identified target and at least three against a contact. Make the attacks ten to fifteen seconds apart. Fire at enemy subs from the target depth. After firing torpedoes, turn 30 to 180 degrees away from the attack point, get or stay beneath the thermocline and cruise away for several minutes, returning to creep speed before getting attacked by reacting enemy ASW aircraft.

Try to attack all targets simultaneously at close range. If this is not possible, one must get exact location data and determine what one is facing. This insures that one is hitting the mission-essential targets. Don't diddle around for long in the middle of an enemy formation before attacking.

Individual submarines do not carry enough missiles to be sure that a sufficient number will get through to a defended target. If one desires to get in close, do not get *too* close. Knowing the activation range for one's missiles is important. **Warning:** Missile firing immediately compromises one's position to air search radars.

If the player has been positively located, he has nothing to lose by immediately conducting an "all weapons" attack. No sense taking all that perfectly good ordnance to the bottom.

The classic indicator of air attack is a dropped torpedo picked up by your listening equipment. Turn to face directly into the attack, go to creep speed and dive to deep depth if one is not already there. If one is already at deep depth, rise to intermediate depth until the torpedo passes, then dive deep again, repeating as necessary. Use the unit window to ensure one's course remains facing directly into the torpedoes attack.

**"He who tries to defend everything, defends nothing." — Sun Tzu**

If time between attacking torpedoes allows, set speed to zero at deep depth. Use creep speed if attacked again.

This technique requires some practice (i.e., save the game as soon as the attack is identified). Once the player has mastered it, the attacking aircraft will run out of torpedoes and one can slink off into the sheltering depths.

If one is attacked without any warning and survives (the sudden thrumming of an undetected torpedo going past one's conning tower is a good indicator), it is advisable to alter course into the direction of attack (or 180 degrees if you didn't notice the direction of attack), go to creep speed, and get on the other side of the thermocline from where one was at the time of attack. If there is no enemy sub behind the player, then get beneath the thermocline.

Ballistic Missile Submarines (Boomers) — Creep deep. Be patient. Get within range of all missiles. Operate individual submarines. When firing with other submarines, time the firings to mass in time and direction.

Attack Submarines — move slow, listen hard, shoot quick.

## Summary

*Harpoon* is a fascinatingly detailed and complex study of modern naval conflict, as satisfying in breadth as it is in depth. In each battle set, new considerations relevant to modern naval conflict become comprehensible, even to us neophytes. One can only look forward to Battle Sets 4 and 5 (Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean and Western Pacific).

Additionally, the *Harpoon Battle Book* is scheduled for release in or before June. This reference is supposed to include all the detailed weapons and platform data currently accounted for, but not displayed in the game, as well as detailed tactics for use with the different platforms. **cgw**

**Figure A**

| | | Sensors Range (nm) | | | Weapons Quantity/Range (nm) | | | | Spd/Dmg | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Type** | **Class** | **Air** | **Surf** | **Sub** | **Air** | **Surf** | **Sub** | **Helo** | **Rng** | **Pts** | **Nation** |
| *Surface Vessels* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | 13/3 | | | | | | |
| DDG | *Cassard* | 250 | 60 | 1.6A | 40/20 | 8/38 | 10/3.7 | Y | 30 | 136 | France |
| CG | *Andrea Doria* | 360 | 40 | 5A | 40/70 | — | 6/6 | Y | 31 | 206 | Italy |
| PTM | *Ramadan* | 40 | 25 | — | Pt | 4/32 | — | — | 17 | 13 | Many |
| *Submarines* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SS | Type 209 | — | 16 | 8P | — | —28/20— | | — | 22 | 25 | Greece |
| SS | *Enrico Toti* | — | 40 | 7P | — | —12/13.7— | | — | 15 | 14 | Italy |
| *Aircraft* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 2/13 | | | 1317/ | | |
| Attack | Kfir C7 | — | — | — | 4/8 | 2/32 | — | — | 1120 | — | Israel |
| | | | | | | 4/4 | | | 1262/ | | |
| Attack | Tornado | — | 40 | — | 2/10 | 4/20 | — | — | 1900 | — | Italy |
| | | | | | 4/10 | | | | 1338/ | | |
| Fighter | F15C | —110— | | — | 4/24 | — | — | — | 1881 | — | US |
| | Jian 7 | | | | | 2/1 | | | 1320/ | | |
| Attack | Fishbed | — | — | — | 2/8 | 2/0 | — | — | 650 | — | Many |
| | | | | | | | | | 460/ | | |
| AEW | E-3 Sentry | —360— | | — | — | — | — | — | 4374 | — | US |




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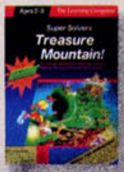
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### The Categories

*Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem-solving.*

*Simulation (SI): Games based on first-person perspectives of real-world environments.*

*Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take an alter ego through a storyline or series of events.*

*Role-Playing Adventure (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).*

*Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.*

*Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.*

*Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of that specific type.*

## Top Role-Playing




## Top Simulation




# THE TOP TEN GAMES

| No. | Name | Source | Category | Avg. # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | *Wing Commander* | *Origin* | *AC* | *92* | *10.64* |
| 2. | *Railroad Tycoon* | *MicroProse* | *ST* | *82* | *10.58* |
| 3. | *Red Baron* | *Dynamix* | *SI* | *69* | *10.39* |
| 4. | *Their Finest Hour* | *Lucasfilm* | *AC,SI* | *107* | *10.32* |
| 5. | *Warlords* | *SSG* | *WG,ST* | *39* | *10.19* |
| 6. | *SimCity* | *Maxis* | *ST,SI* | *126* | *9.56* |
| 7. | *Harpoon* | *Three-Sixty* | *WG* | *77* | *9.48* |
| 8. | *Ultima VI* | *Origin* | *RP* | *71* | *9.43* |
| 9. | *M-1 Tank Platoon* | *MicroProse* | *SI,WG* | *75* | *9.41* |
| 10. | *Bane of the Cosmic Forge* | *Sir-Tech* | *RP* | *51* | *9.37* |

| No. | Name | Source | Category | Avg. # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Lemmings | Psygnosis | AC | 23 | 9.35 |
| 12. | Space Quest IV | Sierra | AD | 31 | 9.32 |
| 13. | Eye of the Beholder | SSI | RP | 71 | 9.30 |
| 14. | King's Quest V | Sierra | AD | 51 | 9.25 |
| | Flight Simulator 4.0 | Microsoft | SI | 40 | 9.25 |
| 16. | Command HQ | Microplay | ST | 53 | 9.21 |
| 17. | Second Front | SSI | WG | 38 | 9.17 |
| 18. | MechWarrior | Activision | ST | 54 | 9.16 |
| 19. | Wings | Cinemaware | AC | 33 | 9.15 |
| 20. | Elvira | Accolade | RP | 30 | 9.13 |
| | Silent Service II | MicroProse | SI | 61 | 9.13 |
| | Red Storm Rising | MicroProse | SI | 74 | 9.13 |
| 23. | Quest for Glory II | Sierra | AD,RP | 28 | 9.10 |
| 24. | Battlehawks 1942 | LucasFilm | AC,SI | 86 | 9.05 |
| 25. | Lords of Rising Sun | Cinemaware | AC,ST | 50 | 9.02 |
| 26. | Ultima V | Origin | RP | 91 | 9.01 |
| 27. | Quest for Glory | Sierra | RP | 57 | 9.00 |
| | Populous | Electronic Arts | ST | 115 | 9.00 |
| | Rise of the Dragon | Dynamix/Sierra | AD | 37 | 9.00 |
| 30. | Space Quest III | Sierra | AD | 34 | 8.97 |
| | Sword of Aragon | SSI | WG,ST | 45 | 8.97 |
| 32. | Romance of the 3 Kingdoms | Koei | ST,RP | 31 | 8.96 |
| 33. | Secret of Monkey Island | Lucasfilm | AD | 29 | 8.95 |
| | Wasteland | Electronic Arts | RP | 117 | 8.95 |
| 35. | Overrun | SSI | WG | 24 | 8.93 |
| 36. | Falcon | Spectrum Holobyte | SI | 62 | 8.90 |
| 37. | Dragon Wars | Interplay | RP | 30 | 8.87 |
| | NFL Challenge | XOR Corporation | ST | 86 | 8.87 |
| | Indianapolis 500 | EA | SI | 32 | 8.87 |
| 40. | Power Monger | Electronic Arts | ST | 45 | 8.81 |
| | Might & Magic II | NewWorld | RP | 54 | 8.81 |
| 42. | The Magic Candle | Mindcraft | RP | 43 | 8.80 |
| | LHX Attack Chopper | EA | AC | 25 | 8.80 |
| 44. | Project Stealth Ftr | MicroProse | SI | 29 | 8.79 |
| | Starflight II | Electronic Arts | RP | 63 | 8.79 |
| 46. | Bard's Tale III | EA | RP | 54 | 8.77 |
| | Leisure Suit III | Sierra | AD | 47 | 8.77 |
| 48. | Airborne Ranger | MicroProse | AC | 74 | 8.76 |
| 49. | Bandit Kings | Koei | ST,RP | 28 | 8.75 |
| 50. | Covert Action | MicroProse | AD | 30 | 8.73 |
| | Jack Nick Unlimited | Accolade | ST | 26 | 8.73 |
| | Battles of Napoleon | SSI | WG | 30 | 8.73 |
| 53. | Battlechess | Interplay | ST | 62 | 8.72 |
| 54. | Action Stations | Conflict Analytics | WG | 22 | 8.71 |
| | Breach 2 | Omnitrend | ST,RP | 29 | 8.71 |

## THE HALL OF FAME

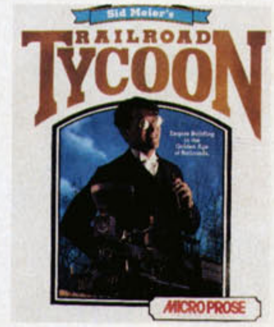
*The Games in CGW's Hall of Fame Have Been Highly Rated by our Readers over Time. They are Worthy of Play by All.*

**Bard's Tale I**
**Chessmaster**
**Dungeon Master**
**Earl Weaver Baseball**
**Empire**
**F19 Stealth Fighter**
**Gettysburg**
**Gunship**
**Kampfgruppe**

**Mech Brigade**
**Might & Magic**
**M.U.L.E.**
**Pirates**
**Starflight**
**Ultima III**
**Ultima IV**
**War in Russia**
**Wizardry**

| No. | Name | Source | Category | Avg. # Resp. | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56. | Secret of the Silver Blades | SSI | RP | 47 | 8.70 |
| | Nuclear War | New World | ST | 41 | 8.70 |
| | Neuromancer | Interplay | AD | 33 | 8.70 |
| 59. | F-15 Strike Eagle II | MicroProse | SI | 58 | 8.69 |
| 60. | Typhoon of Steel | SSI | WG | 43 | 8.67 |
| | Curse of the Azure Bonds | SSI | RP | 70 | 8.67 |
| | Sword of the Samurai | MicropProse | ST,RP | 40 | 8.67 |
| 63. | Ishido | Accolade | ST | 28 | 8.65 |
| | Chessmaster 2100 | Software Toolworks | ST | 44 | 8.65 |
| | Indiana Jones/Graphic Adventure | Lucasfilm | AD | 29 | 8.65 |
| | Ballistyx | Psygnosis | AC | 20 | 8.65 |
| | Zany Golf | Electronic Arts | AC | 31 | 8.67 |
| 68. | Wayne Gretzky Hockey | Bethesda | AC,ST | 36 | 8.62 |
| 69. | Pool of Radiance | SSI | RP | 116 | 8.61 |
| 70. | Champions of Krynn | SSI | RP | 65 | 8.60 |
| | Shanghai II | Activision | ST | 20 | 8.60 |
| 72. | King's Quest IV | Sierra | AD | 58 | 8.59 |
| 73. | Buck Rogers | SSI | RP | 39 | 8.57 |
| 74. | It Came From Desert | Cinemaware | AD | 36 | 8.54 |
| | Genghis Khan | Koei | ST,RP | 34 | 8.54 |
| 76. | Future Wars | Interplay | AD | 24 | 8.53 |
| 77. | Panzer Strike | SSI | WG | 68 | 8.51 |
| | Carrier Command | MicroPlay | AC,WG | 49 | 8.51 |
| | DeathTrack | Activision | AC | 29 | 8.51 |
| 80. | Savage Empire | Origin | RP | 37 | 8.48 |
| 81. | Knights of the Sky | MicroProse | SI | 45 | 8.44 |
| 82. | Manhunter 2 | Sierra | AD | 31 | 8.42 |
| 83. | Nobunaga's Ambition II | Koei | ST,RP | 20 | 8.40 |
| 84. | TV Sports Football | Cinemaware | AC,ST | 50 | 8.39 |
| 85. | Wings of Fury | Broderbund | AC | 52 | 8.38 |
| 86. | Strike Fleet | Electronic Arts | WG | 79 | 8.37 |
| 87. | Fire Brigade | Panther | WG | 30 | 8.34 |
| 88. | BattleTech II: Revenge | Infocom | WG,RP | 42 | 8.33 |
| 89. | Rocket Ranger | Cinemaware | AC,AD | 75 | 8.32 |
| 90. | Nobunaga's Ambition | Koei | ST,RP | 20 | 8.30 |
| 91. | Police Quest II | Sierra | AD | 39 | 8.29 |
| | TV Sports Basketball | Cnmwre | AC,ST | 33 | 8.29 |
| | Modem Wars | EA | ST | 24 | 8.29 |
| 94. | Drakkhen | Data East | RP | 32 | 8.27 |
| | 688 Attack Sub | EA | SI,ST | 59 | 8.27 |
| 96. | Flight of Intruder | SpecHolo | SI | 25 | 8.26 |
| | Lord of the Rings | Interplay | RP | 31 | 8.26 |
| 98. | Manhunter | Sierra | AD | 72 | 8.25 |
| 99. | Centurion | EA | ST | 49 | 8.24 |
| 100. | Police Quest | Sierra | AD | 98 | 8.23 |

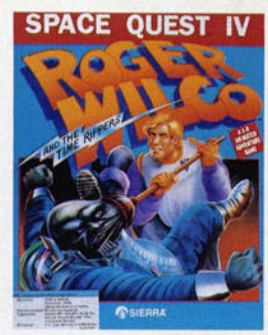
### Top Strategy



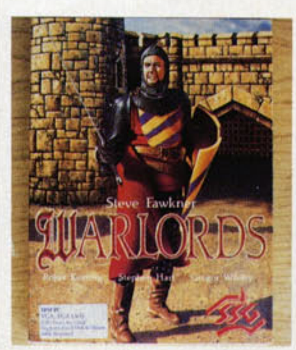

### Top Action




### Top Adventure




### Top Wargame



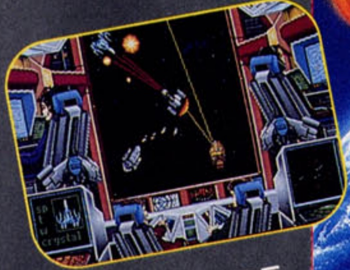
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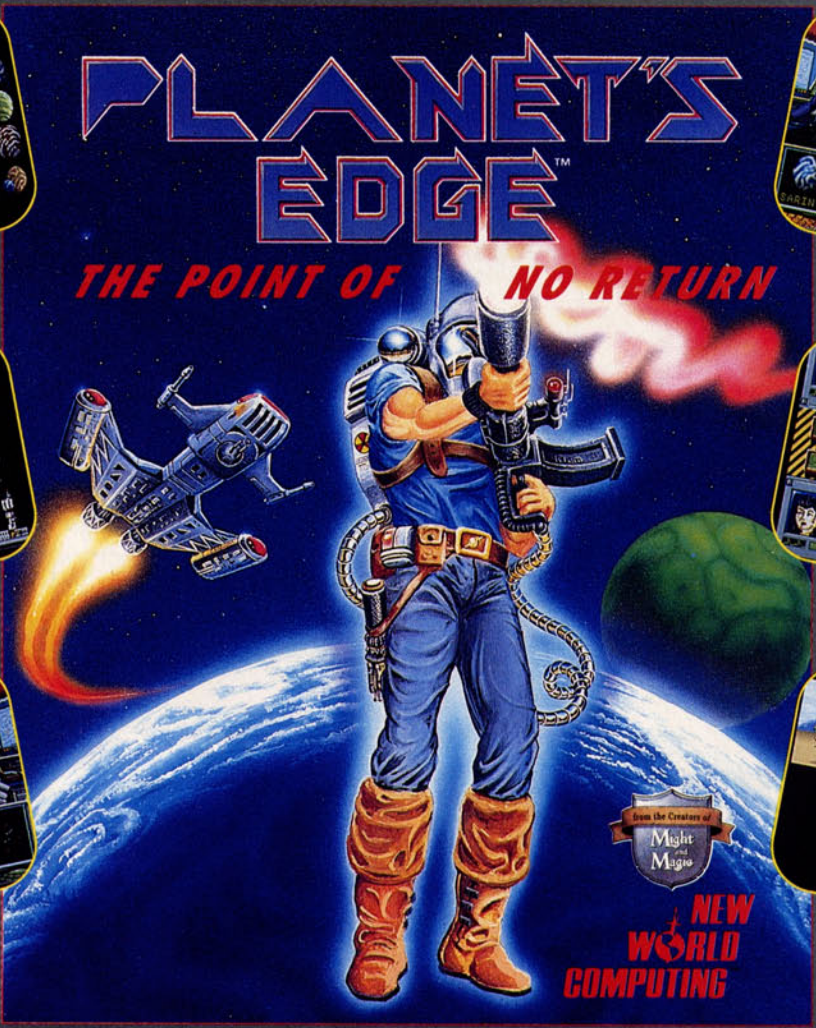
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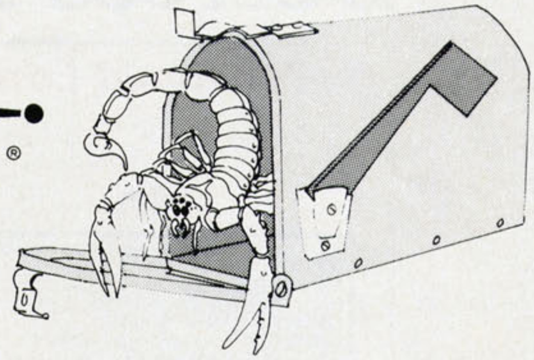


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# Scorpion's Mail



Well, here we are in the depths of summer again. Fortunately, it's pretty cool in the depths of the mail room. It's also roomier. After a terrific struggle, I worked up the courage to dump about three years' worth of letters. There is, after all, only so much paper one can stand the sight of before going crazy (and you *don't* want to be around Fred when he goes crazy)! At least I can walk around now without knocking over sacks of missives.

Before we get to the good stuff, once again I have to say: if you live in the United States, you *must* enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a reply. Having mentioned that in a previous issue not too long ago, I thought that would be enough, but... some people still send in letters with no SASE (and some of them say they read my columns every month, so it's a mystery how they manage to overlook this little item).

Also, please do *not* send money, foreign stamps, or international reply coupons. There is no charge for getting help with games, and outgoing postage to foreign countries is not excessive (even with the new postal rates).

Okay, 'nuff said about that, let's move on to the games!

**Bane Of The Cosmic Forge:** There certainly have been a lot of letters showing up lately about this game! One problem that's keeping folks up late is what to do after they've gotten past the skull door. Well, that's where having a chat with the giant snake in the mines is helpful. So is getting open the second grate on the skull door level. Most important is breaking open the crystal with the wizard's face. Remember, there are *four* sides to this crystal and you have to find all of them. If you haven't, more careful exploration of the mines is in order, especially the dark areas.

**Spellcasting 101:** Quite a few people are having difficulties in getting away from the college. They just can't get their hands on the fancy surfboard and, without that surfboard, they're not going anywhere any time soon. You'd be *amaized* (hehe) at how easy the solution really is. Too bad there isn't a sign somewhere that says "this way to the egress."

**Wing Commander:** A few issues back, I mentioned that a number of people who have played this game thought very highly of the Kraft Thunderstick. Since then, I have heard from an equally large (and vocal!) contingent who swear by the CH Flightstick, which they claim is as good or better. Since, alas, *Wing Commander* isn't my type of game, I can't render an opinion on which, if either, is really the better joystick. However, since both products have a large following, and comments on them are favorable, I'm just passing along some recommendations that came to me!

**Secret Of Monkey Island:** Some folks are having a hard time getting a head in this game. Not "ahead," mind you, but "a head." A little problem in navigation, so to speak. This is one of those situations where you need to make a little trade. After all, those cannibals aren't especially bright, and they aren't likely to be able to tell the difference between "ahead" and "a head." Now, if you are bright enough, you should be getting a head in no time at all.

**Death Knights Of Krynn:** In an earlier issue, I mentioned that my party had not been able to get open a certain door in Quazle. Since then, I have heard from SSI that there is, indeed, a minor bug here (yes, they are fixing it up) and that the way to get the door open is to have a thief (preferably a high-level one) pick the lock. Bashing or Knock won't do the job. So, if the door is giving you trouble, try a thief. Or (if you don't have one) you can leave it alone, since getting through to the other side isn't necessary in order to complete the game.

**Eye Of The Beholder:** Let's talk about a key item here. You'll need three (count 'em, three) Dwarven keys to get from level six (those wonderful Kenku) down to level seven (those wonderful Drow). Be careful how you use them, because there are only so many in the game. Also, you will need a Drow key to open up the portal to Mr. Eyes. So, be certain to hang on to one of those.

**Hard Nova:** There are some folks who are having a hard time getting the Bremer (no, not your guy; the ones in the asteroid ship) to be cooperative. Keep in mind how the Bremer navigate in the first place. Maybe you've met someone they'd like to meet. One man's noise is another man's....

**Pool Of Radiance:** Just because someone tells you something, doesn't necessarily mean it's true. When you're on the track of Mr. T, don't be misled. Anyone can *say* he's Tyranthraxus; that doesn't mean he actually *is*. Unless a few lightning bolts are winging your way, I'd be inclined to doubt the veracity of a self-proclaimed "Tyranthraxus." Things are not always what they seem.

And that's about it for this look into the mailbag. Until next time, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

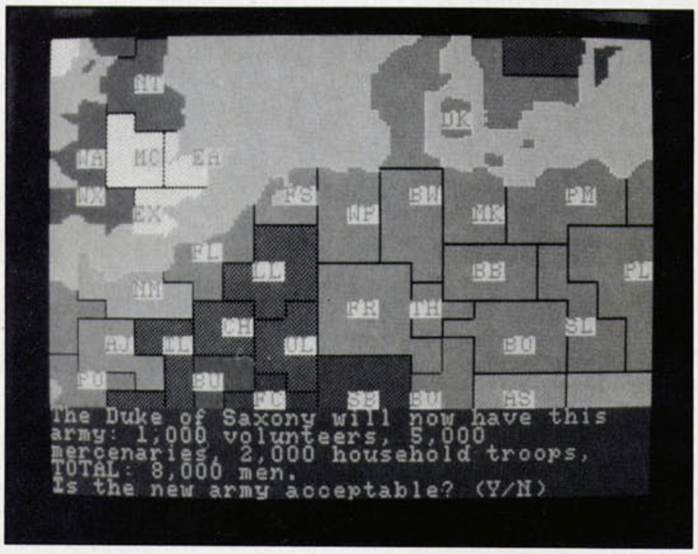
On Delphi: Visit the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: Stop by the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring! CGW

# Decrees From the Saddle

## Medieval Lords: Soldier Kings of Europe

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Medieval Lords : Soldier Kings of Europe |
| SYSTEM: | IBM |
| # OF PLAYERS: | One to ten |
| PRICE: | $59.95 |
| DESIGNER: | Martin Campion |
| PUBLISHER: | Strategic Simulations, Inc. Sunnyvale, CA |







*by Chuck Moss*

Some rulers in the Middle Ages were known as "The Great" or "The Conqueror." Others are remembered as "The Fat," "The Unready" or "The Foolish." Players get their chance to find out which designation would best fit their leadership styles in **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**'s new strategy game, *Medieval Lords.*

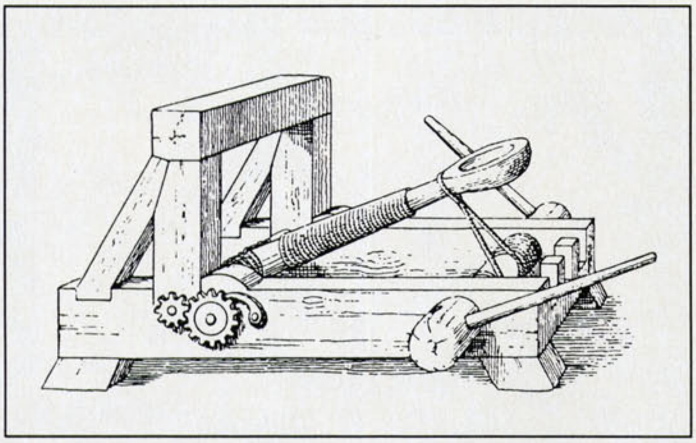
Billed as a historical simulation and written and designed by Kansas history professor Martin Campion as a classroom instructional aid, *Medieval Lords* allows up to ten human and six computer players to chart the destiny of Europe. *Medieval Lords* permits a player to counsel the liege lords of a medieval European state, in one of six scenarios, and manage the kingdom until 1530. The scenarios start at 100-year intervals and allow the player to inject himself into a wide variety of historical situations. Game length varies from 10 turns all the way up to a campaign game from 1028 to 1530. Solitaire suitability is high, with three levels of difficulty.

### Having the Royal Ear

In *Medieval Lords*, the player is cast in the role of "advisor" to a lord: a king, duke, Islamic caliph, or even the Holy Roman Emperor or the Pope. As "advisor," the player controls the foreign, domestic and military policy of the state (referred to as "domain.") — everything except the lord's periodic spending binges.

Imagine an immortal time traveller sent back to influence history, and the situation gains focus. Players pick their lord at the beginning of the game, but can transfer to another domain (only upon the death of their lord) by incurring a victory point penalty.

Victory points are the heart of the game. Players keep a running total of points earned (for building up a domain, conquering provinces, etc.) or lost (for lost wars and revolts). A successful player will earn points for effective nation-building — not *necessarily* for conquest. The point of the game is to lift one's domain out of the Dark Ages muck, not to conquer the map (although conquest *is* the fun part). At the end of the game, points are totalled up for all players, and a rating from "Slave" to "Prince" is assigned the player.



## Medieval Management

Each game turn represents one year and is composed of "actions," chosen by the player. Each player has a limited number of actions he can try (from three to six, as determined by the player before the game begins). Successfully accomplishing these things depends on the computer-generated qualities of his lord. "Actions" include nation-building policies like supporting towns, nobles and bureaucrats, building castles, making treaties and subverting the enemy, or war actions like raising armies, moving, fighting and putting down rebellions.

To build a realm strong enough to defend itself and expand requires solid carpentry. Supporting nobles will give a player a certain volatile military might, but supporting the towns will insure more money. Players can run up debt, but this only leads to the rise of "assemblies" (like Parliament) which hem in royal power and increase the likelihood of revolts. Players definitely *don't* want to encourage these bodies, no matter how much Winston Churchill may praise them 900 years down the road.

## Nobles Versus Middle Class

The historical monarchs who were successful during the actual period simulated built bureaucratic structures and supported the towns (the nascent middle class) *against* the nobles and used the revenues to build their own standing armies. The dynamics of *Medieval Lords* lead the player toward this strategy — but it's best done with small, tight realms the size of Elizabethan England or Spain.

The bigger the domain, the more tightly stretched a player's resources are apt to be and the more vulnerable it will be to rebellions and outbreaks of heresy. Players who neglect their political infrastructure will end up simply marching around putting out fires. Then there is the Black Death and the Mongol hordes to be dealt with, which is sure to tax one's ingenuity, if not one's citizens, to the limit.

## Fire the Royal Cartographer

Originally conceived for the Apple II, *Medieval Lords* is a graphic throwback to the days of *Colonial Conquest.* The screen boasts a flat political map with no terrain features, save water, divided into scores of blocky-shaped provinces. The commands are menu-driven with "actions" performed by choosing items from the keyboard. The only graphic interaction is performed by marching one's army — players are only allowed to build one — across the map.

A typical game turn with one solitaire player and six computer foes takes about ten minutes, but most of that is spent watching

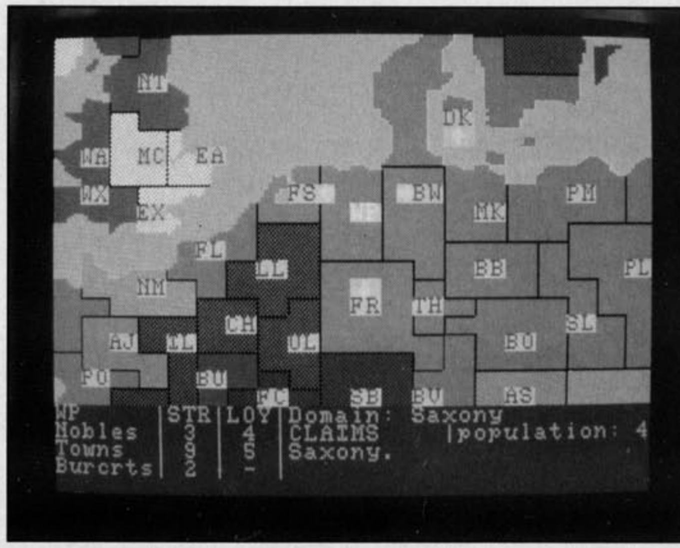
the machine play itself, displaying data on various events. A player can limit the data displayed, which will speed up play immensely, making the 500+ turn campaign viable.

## Hear, Ye! Hear, Ye!

This reviewer's verdict on *Medieval Lords*? Good news and bad. The bad news first: *Medieval Lords* is graphically nowhere in the league of products like *Command H.Q.*, *Populous*, *Railroad Tycoon* or even *Sword of Aragon*. The interface is unduly clunky, and much of the information, like victory chances, available to the player is severely and ahistorically limited.

Further, as a historical simulation, purists will object that reducing the complex web of medieval politics to a manageable set of choices reduces the potential for gleaning a sophisticated understanding of the period. Instead of understanding that the game randomizes the historical figures to insure replayability, they would contend that the game severely slights major historical characters, generating lords and killing them off before their actual "time," and preventing players from seeing how epochal these figures were. (This reviewer was enraged by the computer's constant random snuffing of Emperor Frederick II.) Perhaps there should have been a pure historical scenario where the historical figures could attain their full stature. It probably wouldn't have been much of a "game," however, and the value of this game is not in memorizing time lines, but in understanding the dynamics of the period. In the latter, the game succeeds dramatically.

Wargamers will be furious in that terrain factors are non-existent. There appear to be no movement points, so an army can march all over a player's realm. In 1350, this reviewer was able to put down a rebellion in Gibraltar, squash heresy in Denmark, and still march to conquer Constantinople. (Okay, so it was a *big* empire.) No one could do this with an army today, let alone in the 14th Century. Part of the problem here is that they are seeing the game as a *wargame* rather than a strategy game. As a strategy game, the decision-making process is more abstract and does not require the micro-managing of detailed military simulations.




*Medieval Lords* is, frankly, a challenging and intriguing game in which historical buffs will be delighted to match wits with the Pope and the Khans. What wargamer hasn't toyed with the idea of taking command of Byzantium, the Holy Roman Empire or Crusader Jerusalem and rewriting history? It gives one's romantic imagination free play. This game definitely opts for playability over presentation and hence will probably be a jewel that will only be discovered by discriminating strategy gamers who do not have to be "seduced" by marketing "chrome" into playing an excellent game.

The many computer characters make for challenging diplomacy and, in a pinch, a player can flee a collapsing realm and start anew. The economic, political and military simulation is so simple that the learning curve is short, despite the poorly organized and verbose documentation. Play moves very fast. The menu commands are simple and easy to use. Few can resist the joy of seeing the map slowly turn to one's chosen color. In short, *Medieval Lords* is an entertaining and challenging computer game, despite — or, perhaps, because of — its limitations.

## Strategy Hints

**Primus**: First-time players should select a small, compact realm. Political, economic and social development should take priority over any military buildup beyond bare defensive necessity. Support towns and bureaucrats until town loyalty is a minimum of "5" and bureaucratic strength is at least "3" in every province. This is how the Dark Ages were really rolled back, folks.

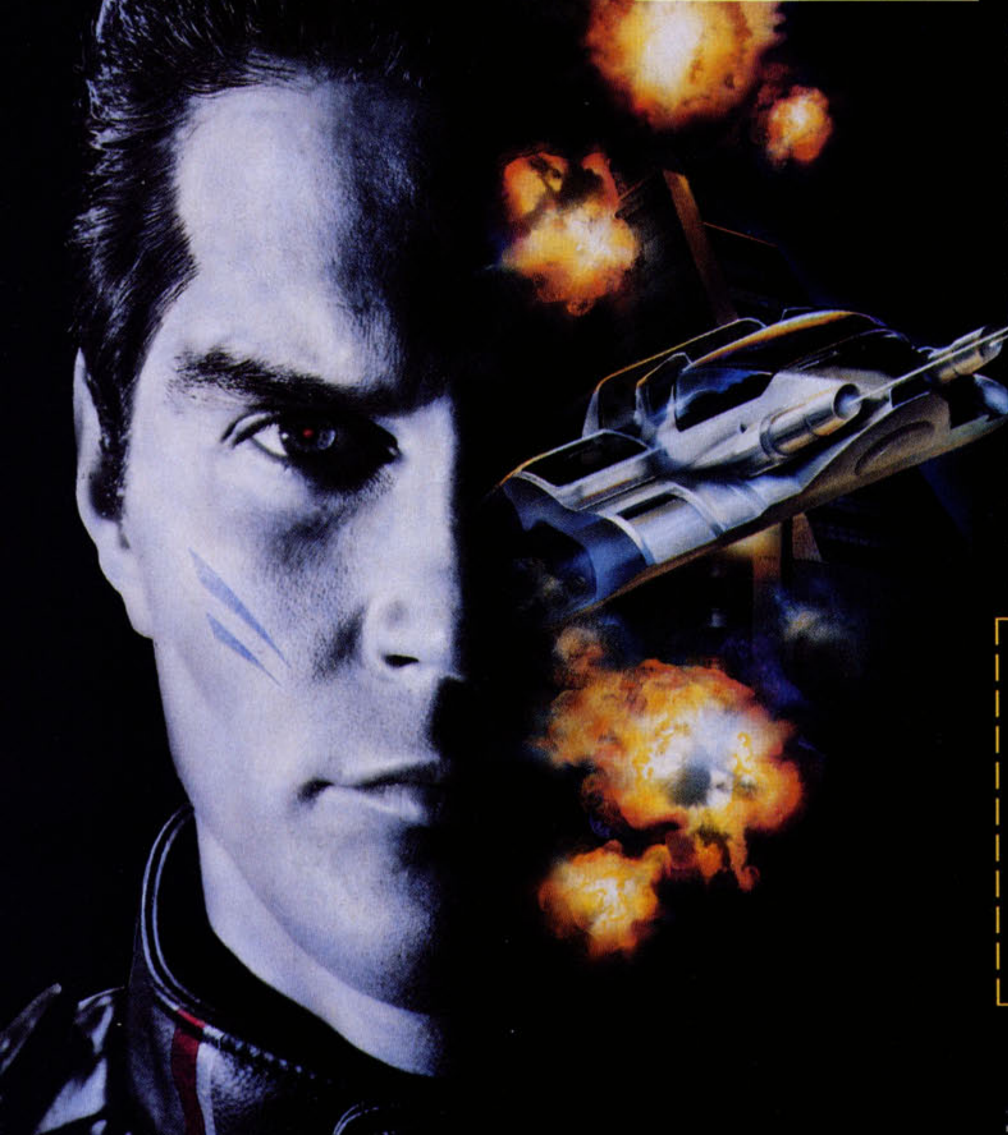
**Secundum**: Take neighboring provinces one at a time, and stop for at least two turns to "consolidate" them, particularly if the new prize has a different religion than one's own. Anything beyond that is stretching limited administrative resources beyond their capability. Slow, steady, long-term nation-building is the key to relighting the Dark Ages. **cgw**

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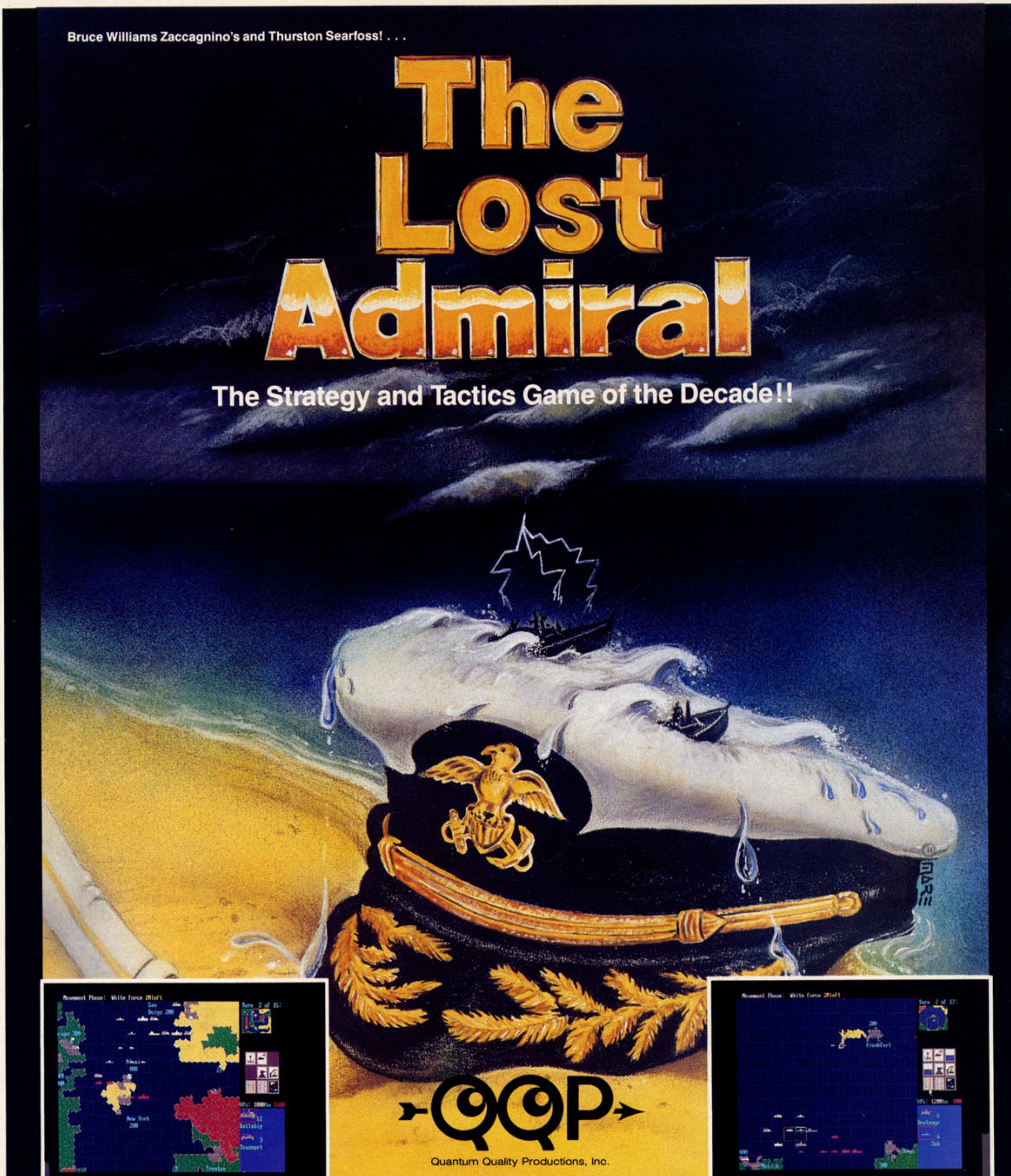
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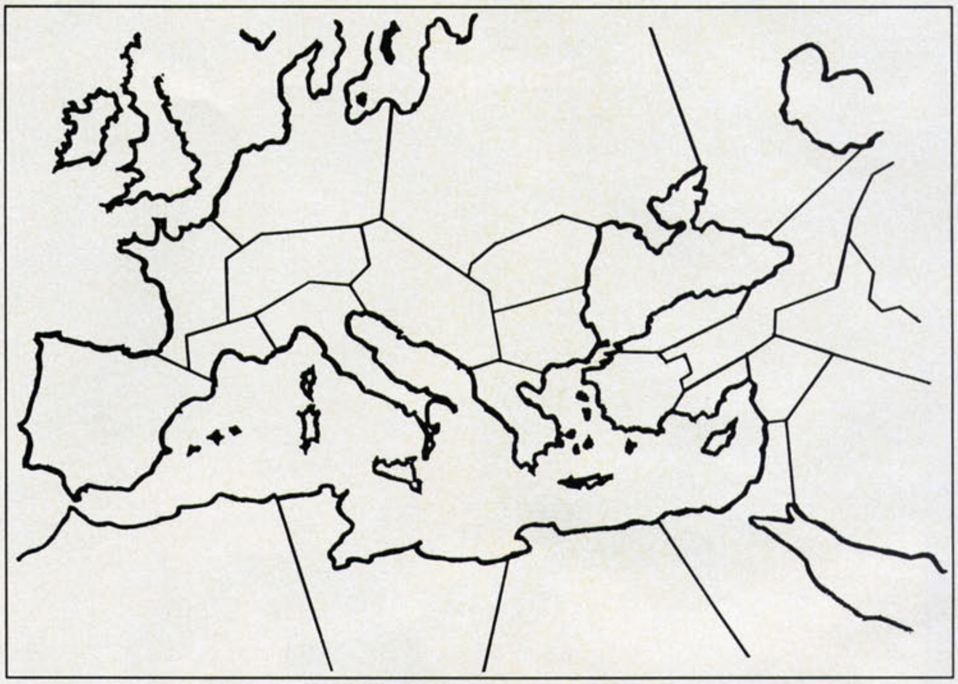
**"The Lost Admiral" computer game is IBM PC compatible. It can be obtained through your favorite retailer or ordered direct by calling: 1-908-788-2799.**

# When in Rome, Do as the

## *Electronic Arts'* Centurion: Defender of Rome

*by Marcvs Licentiovs Ridicvlovs, Pontifex Minimvs*

All Gaul was divided into three parts (unfortunately, this article is longer). Fortunately, *Centurion: Defender of Rome* is now available on three formats: Amiga, IBM and Sega Genesis (and all play identically).



Determined, we set out many leagues toward its conquest and made history's first long-distance collect Gaul. Yet while that pompous Pompey pontificated and that silly Caesar sallied, all Rome knew that a rising young soldier could go far. A *Centurion: Defender of Rome* could write his own ticket to the Curia and occupy front row seats at the Forum next to Jackvs Nicholson.

Here, young soldier of Rome, in these Annals, lie some secrets to success. Whether leading legions, forming fleets, chasing chariots or taking tribute, know that all must be done with the Emperorship in mind. The Senate will not help, the people will not help and the barbarians will *certainly* not help in the cause of supreme rulership. Only this tome will help the wary warrior. Go forward, therefore, and conquer!

### Know Your Limits

Perhaps the most important element of the game is setting the play difficulty levels. The degrees of challenge offered between the Galley Slave and Emperor levels are *enormous*. In land battles (the most common cinematic event in the game), one can quickly see this in the size of the Roman cohorts and the effectiveness of barbarian cavalry and elephants. Since the right level for a player can only be found by cruel trial and error, exercise a little patience and don't hesitate to individually adjust the chariot racing, gladiatorial combat, land conflicts and sea battles.

### A "Tribute" to Fund Raising

Every good politician knows the value of fund raising, but in Rome one must have special "talents" for money management. Basically, one must develop Ben Hur-like chariot racing skills and keep betting the limit. With full coffers, one can keep the strongest possible legions in the field and reduce taxes to tolerable levels. Spending money on such wasteful exercises as gladiatorial spectacles is a necessary evil in *Centurion*, and circuses can cost plenty of bread. (Mr. Peabody would say that this is the origin of the phrase "bread and circuses.")

It kind of reminds one of that joke they tell in the baths about a funny thing that happened on the way to the Forum. A guy says, "Hey, buddy, how do I get to the Circus Maximus?" and the other guy says, "Practice." So it is that one must become adroit at the chariot races. Many times the stretcher bearers will have to haul one away before the right combination is found and the "safe" containing one's betting fortunes is "cracked." Allow *this* safecracker to say that taking a light, fast chariot is usually the way to go; once in the lead, there's no looking back. Corruption and off-track bribery are optional and not recommended due to their expense (which defeats the purpose of maximizing profits). Take the "outside lane" around corners so that maximum speed can be maintained for the ensuing straightaways, and "lean" into corners once they are entered. Remember, the whip is used, literally, for extra horsepower, but too much will cause one to end up beating a dead horse before reaching the third porpoise.

### The Best Offense is a Good Defense

On land, the battles can be tough. While the different formations and tactics presented offer combinations of cinematic grandeur to behold, they offer little in the way of assuring victory on the battlefield. Often, every advantage possible is necessary to carry the day. The best offense, therefore, is a good defense. Never once has this "historian" chronicled a battle where the barbarians have failed to charge into an attack. At each battle, they lunge headlong, in one fashion or another, at the player's cohorts. This weakness in enemy tactics can be exploited....

Here, then, is the secret: stand fast. Units which are *not* moving have a slight battle advantage over units which are, and as often as not, that is the difference between victory and defeat. Truly,

# Emperors Do

## *Conquers New Formats*

there is no better tactic than beheading the enemy's commander, but failing that, stand fast. Experimenting with different formations and tactics is amusing, and will even work on occasion, but the safest plan is to balance the formation and hold on. When the enemy approaches, reserves can be committed to pressed sectors, for a line held is a battle won.

### Fleet Fleets

There seems to be little profit in sea battles and, if they can be avoided, they should be. The primary purpose of a fleet is to grow large enough to ferry full strength legions to the islands of the known world. Without transports, one cannot conquer Britain or Sardinia. True arcade skills need to be developed for superior ramming and corvus tactics to work, but with few fleet battle opportunities and the extreme importance of each, earning one's water wings can be frustrating. Remember where galley slaves come from, and take this challenge at its *easiest* level.

### Go West, Young Legionnaire

With the Senate's imposed restrictions on the number of legions which a player can command, making optimal use of them, particularly early on, is important. To that end, it is generally a sound strategy to methodically conquer the board to the west first (saving, perhaps, Britain until a fleet can be amassed). With that conquered, the legions can move with measured tread eastward until, at last, they face the "Parthian problem." While it has been said that one man's Mede is another man's Persian, the Parthians fight like the Detroit Pistons coached by Darth Vader. Several legions will have to be squandered in futile "wave" assaults before these hated horsemen will bow to Rome.

### Saving Money at the "Banks" of the Nile

Everyone, it seems, wants to conquer Cleopatra rather than Egypt. While we've heard rumors of success, bedfellows make strange politics and Cleo is not likely to do a horizontal surrender. In fact, most barbarian leaders one encounters will speak little more than "Your mother wears combat sandals." With insults like that, one can quickly see how Rome was provoked into building an empire based on barbarian diplomatic slights. Legions speak louder than words, and words will often fail a general. It is better to practice one's military arts, rather than one's oratory skills.

### Aesop or ASAP?

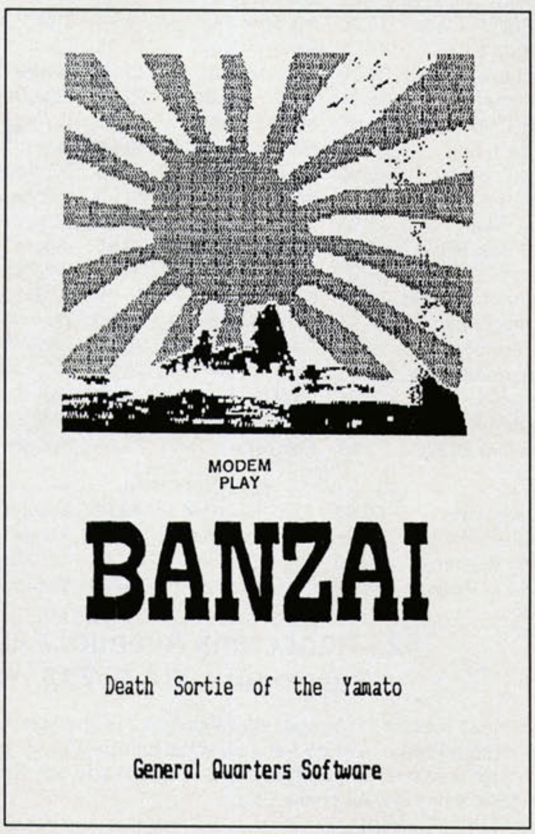
Before setting out, brave soldier, know that the sufferings of the army are "legion" and the fortunes of Mars are fickle. There will be nasties from Neptune, and beauties from Bacchus. There will be Macedonian mishaps (also know as "Greek tragedy") and good Sarmatians (not to be confused with Samaritans). One might end up impaled on the scythes of Scythia or have a lot of Gaul. In any case, the final word of council is: cheat the Fates and save the game before every major action. **CGW**




| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE: | Banzai: Death Sortie of the Yamato |
| SYSTEMS: | Apple II, IBM |
| REVIEWED: | IBM |
| COPY PROTECT: | Document check |
| # PLAYERS: | 1-2 |
| PRICE: | $35.00 |
| DESIGNER: | Dr. Owen P. Hall, Jr. |
| PUBLISHER: | General Quarters Software<br>P.O. Box 1429<br>Torrance, CA 90505 |

# Fateful Voyage

*by H. E. Dille*




On the 5th of April, 1945, Admiral Seiichi Ito of the Imperial Japanese Navy received the most "honorable" mission of his life. Okinawa was under siege and the Japanese had steeled themselves to fight to the last man, woman and child. They knew that the loss of Okinawa would lead to a large-scale invasion of mainland Japan and, were it not for the efforts of some scientists, that was indeed the original plan. The Japanese philosophy reacted naturally to this threat by adopting unconventional tactics like Kamikaze attacks, the Divine Wind, to stave off the inevitable for as long as possible and provide an "honorable" death to its warriors. Admiral Ito's mission, to sally forth with the super battleship *Yamato* and an escort screen in the face of unstoppable Allied naval might, reflected this fundamental change in approach that was the swan song of the Japanese Empire.

The subtitle of *Banzai* is appropriate to both reality and the simulation. The *Yamato*'s only chance in the scenario is to avoid detection completely and reach Okinawa. For this, the Japanese player will receive 200 victory points and be declared the winner, even if no Allied shipping has been touched. This is *contrary* to the actual primary mission of inflicting as much damage as possible on the Allied invasion forces around Okinawa prior to either being sunk or scuttled. After all, the original orders stated to take on only enough fuel for a one-way trip.

Although these details may seem superfluous at first glance, they are critical to evaluating play balance. It is questionable if such an ill-fated mission as Admiral Ito's is even appropriate for any kind of strategic or tactical wargame, except for the purpose of providing historical continuity. Assuming that is the case, the result is fairly accurate: the *Yamato* will be destroyed any time she is detected, either by carrier-based air power or a superior surface action group. Does this make for either challenging or interesting game play? This reviewer must answer that question with a resounding "No!"

Having dispatched the subject matter for its relative lack of merit, one must turn his attention to the manner in which the subject matter was presented as well. This reviewer had occasion to cover an earlier **General Quarters** release, *Miracle at Midway* (*CGW* #66), some two years ago. At the time, the product received a favorable review because it offered challenging (if not balanced) game play and adequate graphics. It was viewed as an acceptable effort from a fledgling firm. Two years later, one cannot help but feel that *Banzai* is the same game with the same interface and the same graphics, but extremely unbalanced play. Only the names of the combatants have been changed to protect the guilty. Failing to progress in the dynamic environment of computer programming and increasingly sophisticated consumers can only be seen as regression, plain and simple. One quickly realizes that the games are the work of an enthusiast of naval history rather than a "computer game designer." Hence, the games tend to have more pedagogical value than play value, at times.

To those who have not encountered the **General Quarters** interface, the following paragraph is mandatory reading. First, one has the option of playing at the "strategic" or "tactical" level, neither of which approximates reality to

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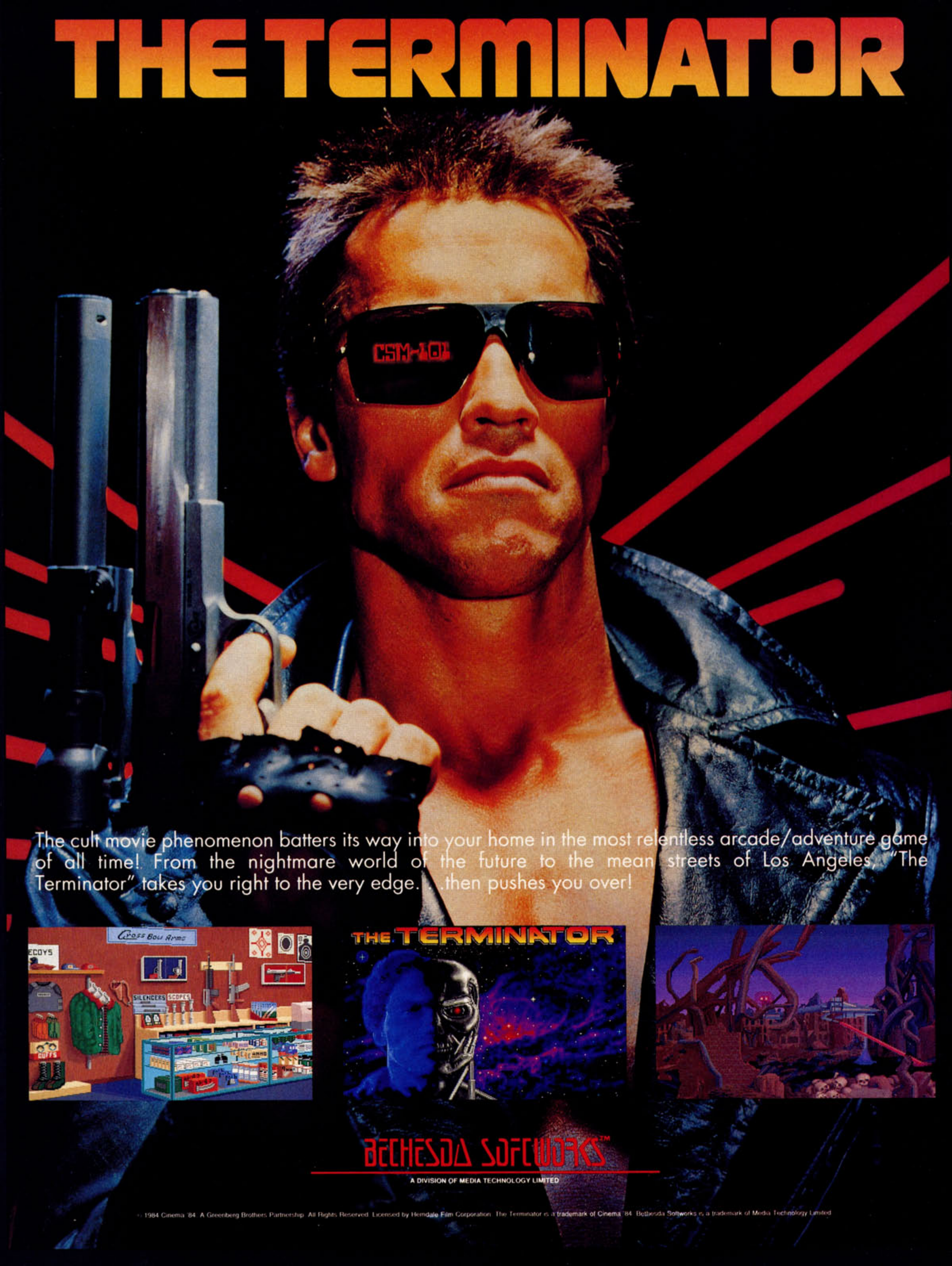
the degree that the name implies. The tactical level involves a single surface action between the *Yamato* or *Yaghai* and whichever American ships are selected. Players control the standard options of targeting, course/speed changes, whether to make smoke or fire star shells (for illumination in night engagements). However, all gunnery resolution is based upon a single salvo reference to the hidden straddle table, regardless of firing rates, spotting or reload times. As such, any engagement for the *Yamato* is almost inevitably deadly against three or more enemy ships, due to her inability to fire more than once a turn, regardless of the number of batteries that can be brought to bear.

On the positive side, counter-flooding has been added as a damage control measure to help maintain an even keel for improved gunnery, but the truth is that the addition does little to improve overall playability, even compared to prior releases.

Playing in the strategic mode, one controls all ship/submarine movement and all aircraft search/attack from a single screen, which represents the area from Taipei to the central Japanese mainland. As the Japanese player, one has the option of launching air strikes from Kure or Taipei whenever American ships are located during search, and may specify up to 25% of the attacking aircraft to be Kamikaze.

Air strikes are handled as an arcade sequence with rudimentary up/down/left/right arrow control for targeting. Naturally, if left to the computer, this function is both faster and more accurate. As such, player interface in this part of the game is not recommended. Why then, one must ask, does this portion even exist? Frankly, it is highly unlikely that many of the generated results have any basis in reality. As an example, in one strategic play-through, the Japanese admiral launched 100 bombers from Taipei at a lone enemy battleship, the *Colorado*. During the attack, 68 bombers were lost and the ship only suffered moderate damage. Granting even the difficulty of accurately bombing a maneuvering surface contact with iron/gravity ordnance, these results are off astronomically in the probability and statistics world. As for the remainder of strategic play, submarine attacks are handled exclusive of player intervention and surface engagements are handled as described in the tactical segment above. The only major revision between this release and others is the addition of a function for which this reviewer must coin a new term: semi-modem play. Basically, it is nothing more than a file transfer routine that allows players to upload and exchange alternating turns (not unlike the play-by-mail algorithm) via the modem. Although it is a start, it will be considered somewhat inferior by many of our readers who have become accustomed to simultaneous movement via modem.

Given these factors, one might ask what *Banzai* has to offer, and to whom. Primarily, it should appeal to players who want a quick game of hide and seek that doesn't require a lot of forethought, planning or knowledge of naval tactics. If one is looking for a good theater-level campaign game of the Pacific or a good tactical wargame of WWII naval combat, it is best to look elsewhere. As such, *Banzai* can only be looked upon as a case of a developer resting on his laurels. Since this particular designer has provided hours of enjoyment in the past, one can only hope his next effort does not require such a Sisyphus-like effort in terms of play balance. **cgw**


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Not every theme park turns out to be Disney World. Without the benefits of bank-breaking special effects, gut-emptying rides and the cartoon clout of you-know-who with the big ears, what can an old-fashioned carnival hope to offer? Anyone for death and insanity? Granted, those two features may not make for sound advertising, but they are exactly what **Konami** is promising in its arcade adventure, *Theme Park Mystery* (*TPM*).

The theme park in question has become famous for its one-way admission tickets and *now* no one will go near the place. This questionable piece of real estate now belongs to a new owner — the player — who has decided to enter the park, pierce its mysteries and, generally, debug the place. Within it, he'll come across the charming Yesterdayland, the barbaric Dragonland, the surreal Dreamland and the dizzying Futureland.

The most interesting setting in *Theme Park Mystery* is found in Yesterdayland, where the game begins. Here, the player may visit any of three slot machines. The first of these is a fortune-telling device, akin to the one which transformed a young boy into Tom Hanks in the movie *Big*. The machine contains Zoltan, easily the most charismatic presence in *TPM*. For a price, this turban-wrapped countenance will dispense cards containing vital information and valuable magic. The second machine is a primitive pinball game that allows the player to win the tokens which are necessary to buy Zoltan's cards. The last of these booths is a crane machine or "grabber," ancestor to those now found in many convenience stores. The prizes within it are the members of a toy-soldier marching band who endearingly stick out their collective tongues at the player each time the crane fails to capture one of their group.

Yesterdayland is remarkable because of its evocative sounds and graphics. The pictures are highly detailed, and each scene is framed by a console containing levers and other paraphernalia belonging to an old-time slot machine. Each time the player pulls a lever or pushes a button, there is the realistic scraping of metal against metal which gives the whole sequence a very authentic touch.

Unfortunately, beyond Yesterdayland lies a big disappointment, as the seductive magic of the carnival is suddenly replaced with several unremarkable arcade sequences. In Dragonland, the player explores a massive underground passage in search of several elusive gremlins and other objects necessary to win the game. The challenge is to do this while dodging the usual variety of creatures, warriors and various anthropomorphic pieces of slime.

Dreamland is actually a large fantasy chessboard containing more gremlins, more useful objects and more creatures. The goal here is to scoop up the gremlins, gather the useful objects and avoid the nasty creatures.

Futureland features a shoot-'em-up, white-knuckle roller coaster ride in which the player must grab yet more gremlins, pick up even more useful objects and (need we say it?) avoid some additional creatures.

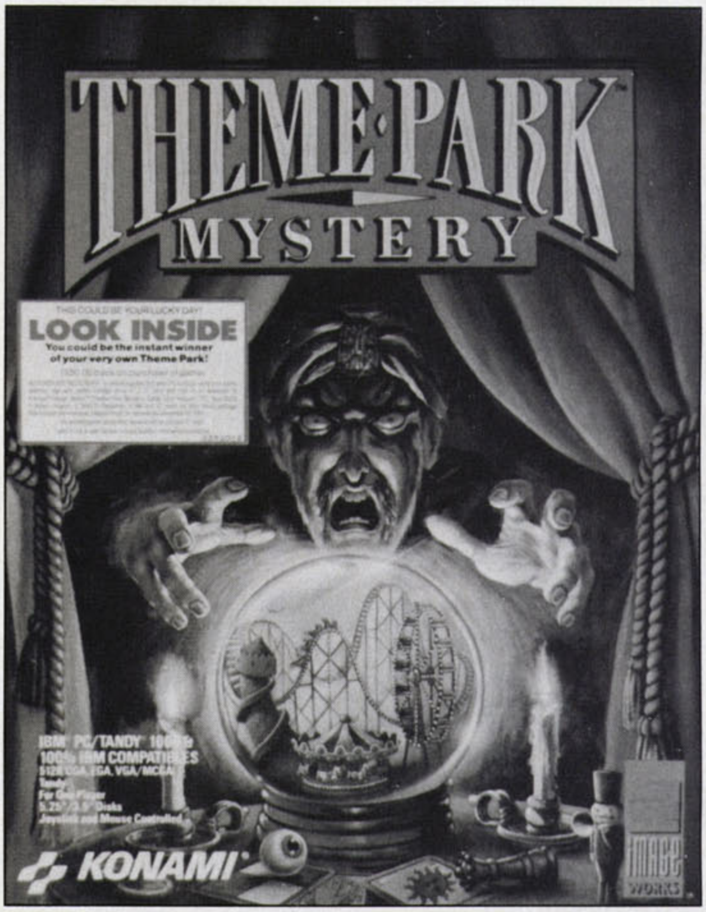
Back in Yesterdayland, the player turns his gremlin collection over to Zoltan and employs the latter's useful objects in order to return to one of the three arcade lands in search of more of the same. Only by capturing all eight gremlins and conveying them to Zoltan will the player be able to solve the mystery suggested in the game's title.

*TPM* is played using both the joystick and the mouse. IBM

# THE SAFETY BAR WILL BE

## *Konami's* Theme

*by Allen*



## RELEASED AUTOMATICALLY . . .

## Park Mystery

*Greenberg*

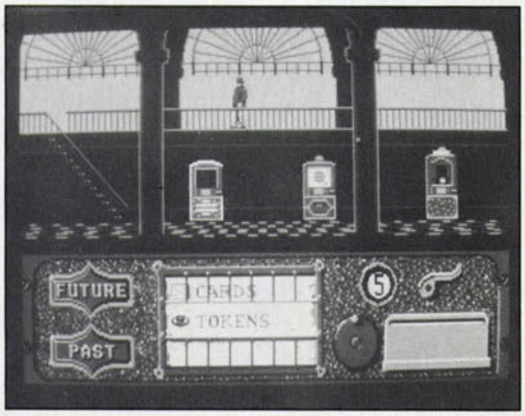
owners don't necessarily need both devices, though they *are* recommended for use in tandem. The hero is made to move and jump using the joystick, while the slot machines and inventory are manipulated with the mouse. The best way to do this is to hold the joystick in one hand and move the mouse with the other. This may be awkward at first but adjustment to it is easy and it shouldn't cause any problems.

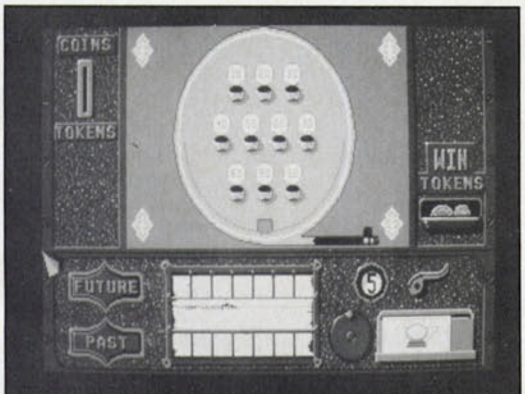
The Amiga disk is copy-protected, while the IBM version requires either a hard disk or several blank floppy disks to decompress to. Both versions require the player to type in a code number in order to access the program. These numbers are printed on that well-known dark brown paper using black ink. Those who object to this type of protection, or simply wish to spare their eyes, should be aware.

Other flaws which mar *TPM* include the absence of a game-save feature. Since the story of the park is episodic, and particularly since the game requires quite a bit of patience and luck at the slot machines, it really is asking too much for the player to repeat these sequences every time the program is run. The game also suffers from a skimpy manual which fails to explain the meaning of many of the items the hero will encounter.

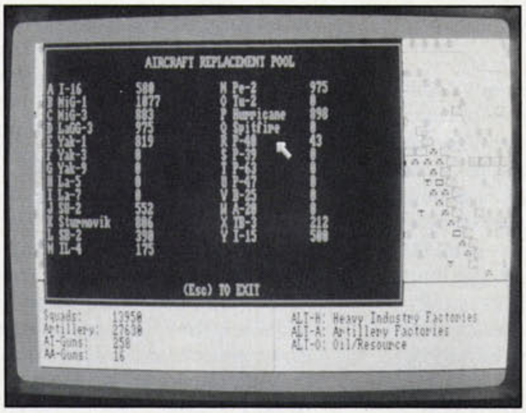
Regardless of the fact that *TPM* is at least three-quarters arcade action, the word "arcade" is conspicuously absent from the game's package. Even the screen illustrations on the box convey very little of the hack 'n' slash to be found within. Anyone investing in this program is almost forced to assume that they are bringing home a mystery adventure or possibly a strategy game. For this, Konami deserves a sharp slap on this wrist. Misleading information of this sort can only serve to anger good customers. Hopefully, Konami will get the message.

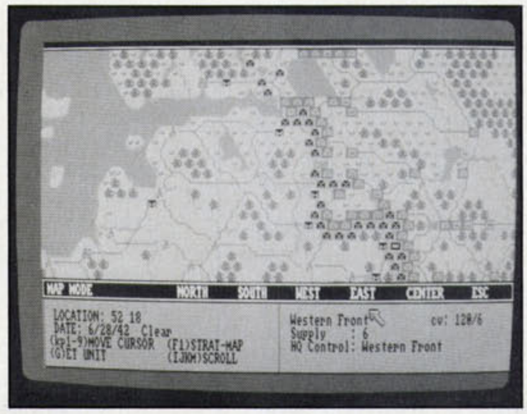
*TPM* has its good moments — specifically those spent in Yesterdayland. The arcade sequences really don't do justice to the game's premise and opening. *TPM*'s most serious problem is its inability to save a game in progress. The conclusion this reviewer must reach is that this one really isn't a very exciting piece of entertainment. For now, you-know-who with the mouse ears has nothing to worry about. **cgw**




| | |
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| DEVELOPERS: | MirrorSoft |
| PUBLISHER: | Konami<br>Buffalo Grove, IL |




# Home Before the Snows Fall

## Axis Strategy for SSI's Second Front

*by Tim Carter*

One of the attractions of wargames will always be the ability of armchair generals and politicians to recreate the great "what ifs" of history. In **SSI**'s epic *Second Front*, players are given the opportunity to recreate the campaign in Russia (from 1941 to 1945) on a strategic and operational scale. As the German player, one is given command of the full range of military resources available to the OKW during this period. Players must implement a comprehensive plan combining land, air and economic campaigns in order to achieve victory.

In order for the German player to win in *Second Front*, he must emulate the historical reality by defeating the bulk of the Soviet forces early on, while the Russian army is still disorganized and before the full weight of the Russian winter takes its toll. If he fails, the Soviets will get continually stronger from the beginning of 1942 onward, while the Germans become weaker. If, then, the German is to win, he must win *early*.

### Strategic Planning

A quick glance at the geography of victory cities and the distribution of their point values shows that there are two principal avenues which an overall German strategy can take: north to Moscow, Leningrad and Gorki or south to Stalingrad and the Caucasus oilfields. In 1941, the easier of the two routes is to the north (Moscow-Leningrad-Gorki). This route has the advantages of being shorter and more direct, and it affords the Germans with flanks that will be much easier to defend.

### Quartermaster Preparations

For this concentrated northern effort to work, the Germans must concentrate their mobile units north of the Pripet Marshes on the first turn. This means the 3rd and 14th Panzer corps should be transferred to the 3rd Panzer Army, while the 40th Panzers go to the 4th Panzer Army (creating two giant mailed fists). An additional Panzer corps, the 16th, should be created from the tank divisions in Africa, the Panzer brigades from the Western front and a couple of Italian mobile divisions (putting these "malingering" mobile formations to work on the Eastern Front). This new mobile corps should also be attached to the 4th Panzer Army. The African units can be replaced by the 22nd and 23rd tank divisions plus one or two infantry divisions from OKW in order to keep the Allies at bay.

The Panzer armies should also have their air complements significantly beefed up. This can be done by transferring Finnish air units, as well as groups from the Western front and Africa. Some consolidation of air units from other HQs to the Panzers should also be considered in order to optimize success in the main push northward.

As a result of these shifts, eleven Panzer corps will be available on the northern and central fronts. The 48th Panzer corps is left in the south to keep the Southern front from stagnating *and* to ensure the fall of Kiev and Kharkov. Such a concentration of strength will allow for a hard-hitting, rapid advance in the north, regardless of the Soviet strategy. With vigilant effort in keeping the Panzers in supply, the German advance should be able to reach the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad in September.

### Go East, Young Oberleutnant

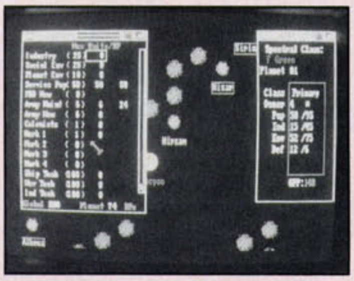
The lines of advance should evolve as follows: the 4th Panzer Army should move along an axis from Riga to Pskov and then turn north to attack Leningrad; the 3rd Panzer Army must set out on a Vilna, Dagavpils and Velikiye Luki route; and the 2nd Panzer Army must bludgeon through Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk and Smolensk, where the most Soviet resistance can be expected, as this route directly threatens Moscow.

### Join the Wehrmacht. See Moscow.

The attack on Moscow should be developed in two stages. The 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies, by concentrating on taking Kalinin and Leningrad respectively, will put the entire Soviet army between Leningrad and Moscow out of supply. (At higher levels of Russian advantage, Soviet units will not be out of supply until the weather turns to rain.) This means that as long as the Germans retain possession of these two objectives, a Soviet counterattack from this area will

*Another Look*

# REACH FOR THE STARS
## 7.45 R.I.D. RATING



Since its 3rd Edition appeared on the Macintosh format back in 1986, this perennial favorite has come out in virtually every format imaginable, including the C-64 and Apple IIGS. When first released in 1983, it was an instant hit, particularly with the Apple II users who then dominated the computer game market. Today, the 3rd Edition Apple II version is still considered the best many formats offered.

Though no longer on our Top 100 Rated Games chart (by virtue of its somewhat dated graphics), *Reach for the Stars* still adorns many a hard disk since it is *the* "classic" strategic space conquest game. Conceptually related to the **Avalon Hill** boardgame *Stellar Conquest*, *Reach for the Stars* is a four-cornered struggle for galactic dominance for one to four players (at the same computer). Computer controlled players play at various skill levels, with the "Enhanced Veterans" as deadly menaces, indeed!

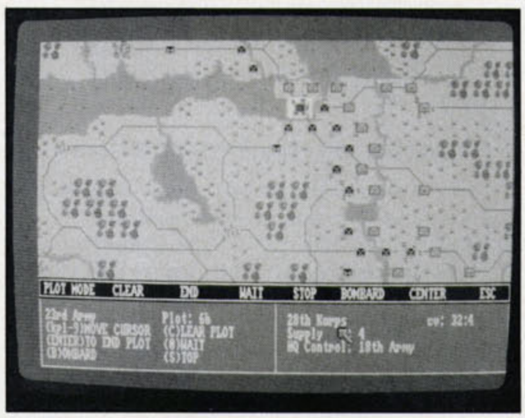
Simple production, movement and combat systems allow players to quickly get involved in empire building (and crushing) with a totally menu-driven interface. Various player options, including technology levels, random events, set-ups and starmaps keep this game fresh and interesting every time it is rebooted.

Ship-to-ship combat is handled abstractly in "rounds," between which players can opt to retreat. One goal being to have the largest popu-lation, growth depends on transporting people to "greener planets" for victory points, or to more resource rich baron planets for production points. Players also receive victory points for winning space battles plus destroying or occupying enemy colonies.

***Computer Gaming World* Index:** *Reach for the Stars* was featured in issue 3.6. It was peeked in issues 5.4 and 51 (the latter being a peek of the 3rd Edition). There was another feature article in issue 55, and a short mention in issue 81.

remain completely untenable, due to supply constraints.

Once Kalinin falls, the Germans must concentrate all available forces in the Moscow area for the final push. Due to the usually high concentration of Soviet strength around the capital, it is generally unwise to try to encircle the entire Soviet force in this region (sort of like a snake swallowing a buffalo). Instead, the forces in and around Kalinin should generally move east and south while the 2nd Panzer Army, reinforced with the strongest units from the Leningrad area, should attack straight up from the center. This maneuver will never win any points for its subtlety, but it will get the job done in the minimum amount of *time* (time being the important element during this stage of the plan). Creating a huge pocket and trying to reduce it before Russia's "General Winter" assumes command could leave the exposed Wehrmacht prone to disaster.




Once Moscow falls, Gorki usually becomes a fairly easy target, provided there are still a few blizzard-free weeks left. This is *particularly* true against the computer opponent. When playing against a human opponent, one should recognize the possibility of taking Moscow, but ending up being forced to stop for the winter. If this is the case, more attention should be given to wiping out the Soviet armies along the Kalinin rail/supply line.

## Tank Tactics

German tactics must be developed with the strategic plan in mind. There is no point in achieving spectacular tactical successes if they do not assist one in attaining the necessary goals (strategic objectives). The German advance should operate as a two-stage process, with some armored units striking deep into enemy territory while others are held in reserve (rested and supplied) to ensure open lines of supply to the front. As the advance progresses and more opposition appears, the Panzer corps should be used in a leapfrog style, with some units resting while others forge ahead. This will allow for a continuous advance which does not overextend German mobile elements.

The German player can further strengthen his main attacking units by transferring numerous reserve infantry divisions to the Panzer army HQs. This will allow the computer-controlled local commanders to reinforce front-line units in key battles as necessary. Remember to return these units to the HQs on the next turn, however, since infantry units left in fast-moving armored corps will suffer high readiness losses during movement, especially during bad weather.

## Victory Through Airpower?

At the higher levels of difficulty, the German player will want to consider a strategic bombing campaign. The Soviet advantage in readiness at the "help" and "max help" levels can be negated by bombing oil facilities in the Caucasus region. Groups of BR-20s and HE-111s should hit Maikop, Tblisi and Baku as soon as they are within striking range. Combined with the loss of Moscow and Leningrad, this bombing will reduce the oil reserves of the Soviets to below 100, leading to losses in readiness for all units. During the rainy season the Germans can divert more forces to this task as the amount of ground fighting will probably be minimal at that time.

## Conquering the Ukraine on Rollerskates

The German attack in the south is generally restrained by a lack of mobile forces. This can be overcome by creating several mobile corps manned by infantry units. These units will not fight well after moving long distances due to loss of readiness, but they will greatly speed the Axis advance in the face of light opposition or delaying tactics.

A determined and tactically competent German assault along these lines will be very difficult for the Soviets to oppose. By concentrating forces and driving straight for the victory cities, the Germans can force the Soviets to commit the bulk of their forces to battle before the weather and Russian reinforcements negate the German's advantages in speed and striking power. If the German troops are not home before the first snow falls, they should be well on their way before the blizzards hit. **cgw**

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# Minuet in (AD&D)D...

(Continued from page 28)

## Cool, but Neverwinter

Neverwinter is a town in the north-western region of the *DragonLance* universe. The people residing in this town, however, are not happy campers. With decaying walls and a severely depressed (literally, rotten) economy (although the inns and merchants which players frequent seem to be doing quite well) are driving Lord Nasher into despair. What he needs, like the Marines, is a few good adventurers to help clean things up, right a few unrightable wrongs, fight some unbeatable foes and generally unravel the mysteries that plague the once prosperous city of Neverwinter.

As befits an on-line role-playing game best, the world of Neverwinter Nights is not a finite one; whereas when one purchases a Gold Box game off the shelf, one can rest assured that when the quest is over, so is the replayability of the game. In an on-line world, however, the dungeoneers never sleep. Instead, they keep adding on new grid squares for persistent (and wealthy) players to explore. Fantastic tales of on-line role-players racking up multi-hundred dollar phone bills playing these games for hours and days and weeks upon end are *true*. Like teenagers, ex-wives and the I.R.S., these "money vampires" can suck one's wallet dry, except in the case of an on-line role-playing game, the phone company is always a willing accomplice.

## On-Line *Is* Role-Playing!

Many things *wrong* with computer role-playing are "righted" when playing on-line. For one thing, role-playing started as a very social interactive pencil-and-paper game for a group of people. Achieving that while sitting alone at one's computer takes away the single most dynamic element of actual "role-playing."

With *Neverwinter Nights*, this problem is solved by allowing each player to run a single character in the game, bearing that person's sign-on name (look for this author, for instance, as "GamingGuy"). Now, players are presented with *real* role-playing game problems, such as finding others to "party" with. No longer does one person generate six perfectly matched, equal level, A-Team characters. Now, one must use whatever personnel happen to be available on-line at that given time. Sometimes, *any* warm body will do. Many a first-level magic user has built up experience points by following a couple of high-level fighters into the woods surrounding Neverwinter!

## Ye Bards and Raconteurs

The mechanics of inter-player communication are about the only thing an experienced "Gold Boxer" needs to learn to play *Neverwinter Nights*. Quite simply, one merely types what to say and hits 'Enter', then everyone within two spaces will read it along the top three "lines" of their Graphical User Interface. By hitting an 'F' key, one can find out who the other players in their area are or, with a shift key added, can find out who's playing *anywhere* in *Neverwinter Nights*. If they are not within two squares, messages can be sent to them (by "telepathy") by simply typing the addressee's name and a colon to precede the message. Even color can be added to one's words (literal color, that is, like green, yellow and grey).

Authentic social interaction is the true beauty, nay, the *soul* of role-playing. For example: This reviewer joined a group one evening and, during the lulls in conversations, kept the party members amused with several one-liners. These barbs garnered responses of "LOL" (Laughing Out Loud) and "ROFL" (Rolling On Floor, Laughing) throughout the night. When a new member joined our party in the middle of an encounter with some trolls by a major pontoon (dubbed a "Troll Bridge"), she asked what character classes and levels we were. Another party member chimed in that this reviewer was an "8th Level Jester." Folks, moments like that... *that's* role-playing!

## Personal Touches For Real Persons

Players assume identities for their characters not only by their banter, however. Where a player might "knock out" a "quickie" when designing a distinctive icon for their Gold Box characters, they are not so hasty in *Neverwinter Nights*. Now, a character's icon is the player's showpiece. Like any other first impression situation, players will want to create icons (through the handy game menus) which truly resemble their characters (or are so wild that others are impressed). It's that personal, "self-portrait" touch that helps this computer game transcend the traditional limits of CRPGs by allowing the "sharing" of one's artistic efforts.

By far, the best aspects of on-line role-playing lie in helping others. Most people like to help out. When new players jumped into *Neverwinter Nights*, this reviewer was moved by the caring and patience showed to them by all. Weak characters were invited to join stronger ones, even on adventures where their survival was problematic. Rich characters were quick to give extra gold and gems to new-found impoverished friends. After each battle, the fighters who came up with magic scrolls would willingly give them to characters whose classes they benefited. Weapons, armor and magic items would find the best of homes, even if with characters who were hitherto virtual "strangers."

## Longing For Alwayssummer Nights

Like any popular "chat" area of an on-line network or any solid computer role-playing game, one can quickly become addicted to it and return again and again. With *Neverwinter Nights* possessing *both* of these silicon-narcotic qualities, it is easy to imagine many new enlistees for **America On-Line** who will make this game their "home" and the players therein into their new friends. If this writer were back in school again, when he longed for the summer and staying up late every night, Neverwinter would have been his Alwayssummer favorite. **cgw**

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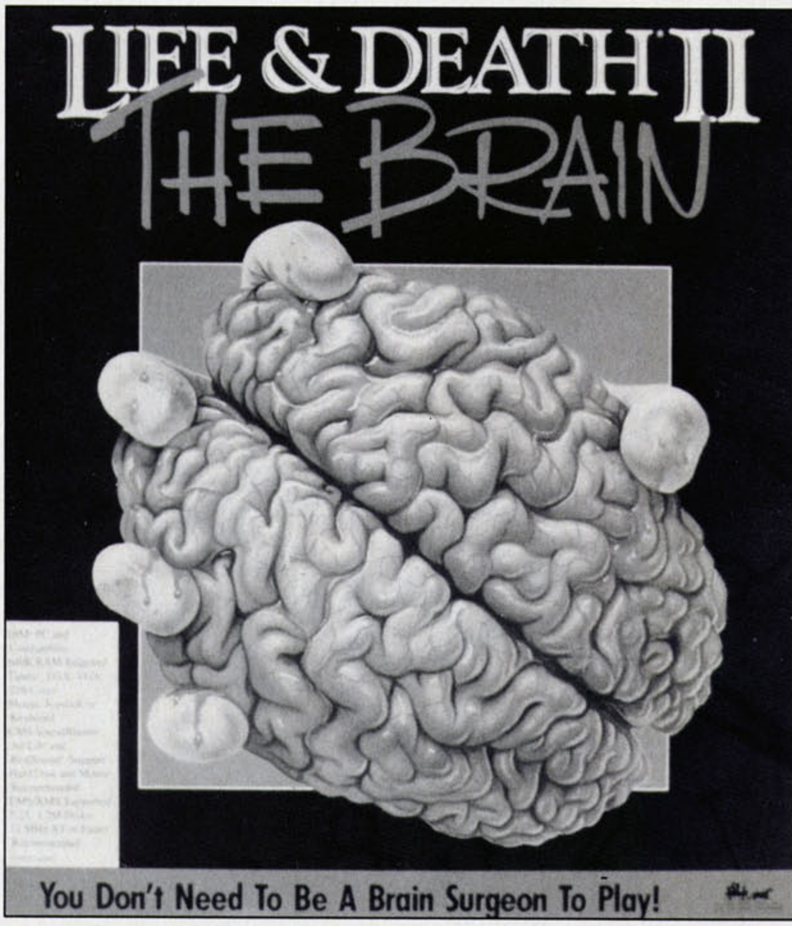

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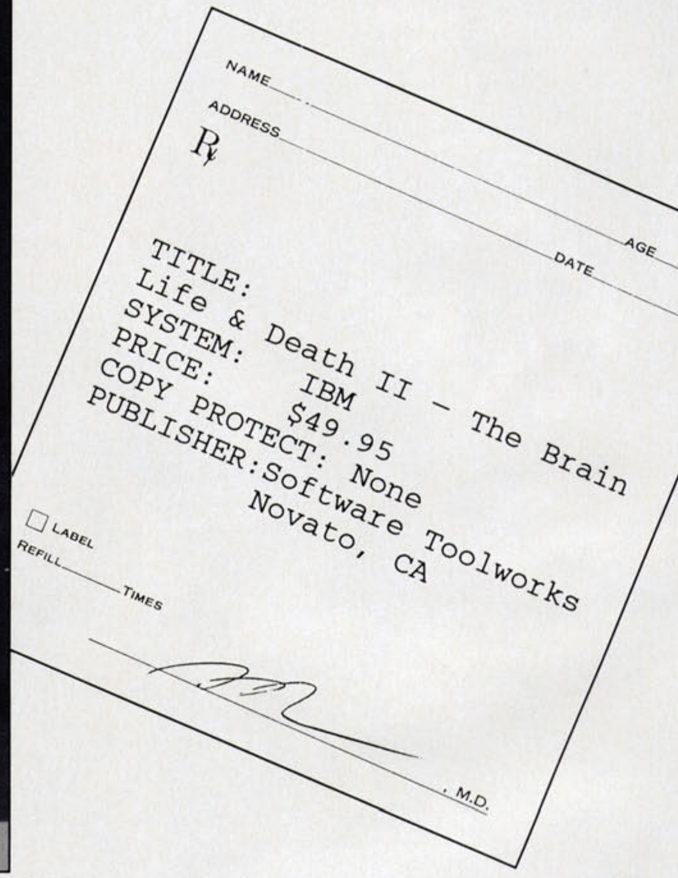
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# A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste

## Life & Death II — The Brain

by Dr. Jesse W. Cheng

*They always say that the first day is the longest when starting out on the neurosurgical wards. "Toolworks General" is no different with that darn loudspeaker paging system dragging me every which way and the Chief of Neurosurgery, Dr. Skelton, giving me a little pep talk on how only the best residents survive. Sure, surgery is the best, but this sink-or-swim attitude has got to change.*

*For example, the first case was a 37-year-old white male found semiconscious at home. There was no history available, other than the fact he was gorked out on arrival at the hospital, but my physical exam showed he had a dilated left pupil that was unresponsive to light.*

*"CAT scan stat," I yelled to the staff.*

*Sure enough, my suspicions were confirmed — a large subdural hematoma from trauma. We wheeled him down to the OR for an emergency hematoma evacuation. I was feeling rather proud of myself as we prepped and draped the patient. I'll show Dr. Skelton that I'm real surgical material. I started the incision across the scalp with efficiency, clamping off bleeders as they popped up. I stripped away the scalp and had just started my drilling into the skull when horror gripped me. The internal bleeding was on the other side of the skull. "Dr. Skelton would like to see you in his office" the pager blared. I should have gone to law school.... [Excerpt from a life in the day of a neurosurgery intern.]*

**The Software Toolworks** company has now produced a sequel to their popular *Life & Death* game. This one is called (guess what?) *Life & Death II — The Brain*. For those who have played *Life and Death*, the "point, click and drag" interface (which is extremely friendly to mouse users and somewhat awkward for keyboard users) is the same. However, there are *major* improvements in the way the product looks and sounds. *Life & Death II* has moved beyond the CGA graphics and internal speaker sounds found in the earlier version and moved into the realm of VGA graphics and support for *AdLib* and *Sound Blaster* boards, as well as *Realsound* code for those who must use the internal speaker. The graphics are not simply aesthetic, however, since the extraordinary effort placed in facial features and anatomical detail adds to the playability of the game. The sound effects also add impressive additional credibility to the game's fiction, from the sound of the drill cutting into bone to the patient reacting to the prick of a needle during his or her physical exams.

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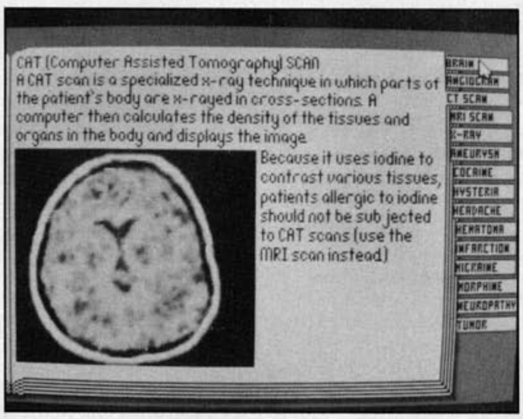


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The game itself features much more than its predecessor. The database has been expanded from two operations and six diagnosable conditions to three operations and ten diagnosable conditions. In fact, the game is so much bigger and more comprehensive that it must perform surgery on the player's hard disk in order to get the complete six megabytes of program on the disk. Prospective surgeons must spend a mandatory ten minutes in "prep" while the program is installing itself!

## Med School Recap

For those unfamiliar with the series, players assume the role of a surgery intern (in this case a neurosurgery intern) in a teaching hospital. In the medical school lecture hall, Chief of Neurosurgery Ryan T. Skelton welcomes the new residents to the neurosurgery wing of Toolworks General and gives a brief orientation to the floor. In a major improvement over the initial game, *Life & Death II* allows players to attend med school "lectures" and learn all about the details of diagnosis, treatment and surgical procedures *before* (s)he makes a mistake. The original featured trial-and-error medical training. Ironically, the tutorial system ends up providing so much information that it required this reviewer to copy the entire contents of the surgical procedure lectures onto ten pages of notebook paper. If only the program allowed us to watch sôme demonstration surgeries like one does in medical school, as opposed to simply reading a text file.




The next step is to hit the floor and make rounds in the hospital. The main screen consists of the hospital layout with all its rooms. Simply point and click to enter a room. The rooms include the OR, four patient rooms, one's own office, Dr. Skelton's office, MRI scanner room, CAT scanner room, medical lecture hall, X-ray room, the cafeteria (a good place to catch up on gossip) and, last but not least, the morgue. Activities include answering pages, obtaining consultations from radiology, going back to medical lectures or even getting a bite to eat out of the cafeteria. There isn't a whole lot of choice of where to go since the overhead paging system will dictate most of one's activity.

## Signs and Symptoms

Examining and diagnosing a patient is only half the battle in *Life & Death II*. Proper diagnosis not only scores points with Dr. Skelton, but also determines whether the prescribed treatment/surgery will be effective or not. Players click on the patient's chart in order to glean a thumbnail history of why the patient was admitted to the service and view a check list of diagnostic radiological procedures one can order. Although it is *possible* to go right to the procedures, this is bad form. One should first perform a physical exam. The physical exam graphics and interface are well done. Clicking on the head, arms or legs opens another screen with a close-up of the respective region. At the bottom of the screen are all the essential tools a good neurosurgeon would presumably use during a physical exam (e.g. a reflex hammer, small pin, penlight, etc.) Here is where the graphics make a real difference in play value. Pupils react to the penlight with constriction and dilation, eyes track a moving pen and realistic knee jerks occur with the strike of a hammer, etc. The sound effects help add believability for the players, as well. Once the physical exam is completed, radiological testing should be done to confirm or refute one's provisional diagnosis. Fortunately, one is not penalized for the cost of tests, so simulated surgeons should emulate their realistic counterparts in ordering numerous and frequent tests (perhaps a statement on the high cost of medicine today). One is penalized for side effects from the tests, however. Patients might be allergic to the contrast dye used to perform a CAT scan or the magnetic field in the MRI scanner might damage a patient's pacemaker. It pays to read the patients' charts very carefully for clues in the history of these problems.

## Primum Non Nocere...

Neurosurgery separates the surgeons from the orderlies. Whether one is called upon to perform a subdural hematoma evacuation, brain tumor resection or aneurysm resection, there is plenty of challenge. Prior to entry into the OR, one needs to select two physicians to assist in the surgery by examining their on-line dossiers. It can make the difference between life and death (pun intended) who one selects to be on the team. For example, the selection of Dr. Kahn, the anesthesiologist, will help in long procedures where patient's oxygenation status and vital signs may vary. If it's a brain tumor resection, the lovely Dr. Brandt would be an asset on the team since her specialty is brain tumor removal. Beware the teaming up of Dr. Kahn and Dr. Brandt since they have had a failed relationship which may affect their job performance if forced to work together (not to mention their demeanor).

The challenge increases when one sets the level of difficulty beyond novice to intermediate, advanced or nightmare level. The latter two modes allow more complications of surgery to occur (like bleeding, cardiac arrhythmia, renal failure, etc.) and provide less assistance from the operating team.

The actual surgery is surprisingly realistic (despite the extensive disclaimer issued by the company that none of the scenes are meant to be based on reality). All the basic implements of a neurosurgery are present like the Trephine bone drill, the bone saw, rainey clamps, retraction clips, etc. The actual operations are quite detailed, from the removal of the scalp and skull to the layers of the outer membrane covering the brain. As if learning the actual procedure in performing the operation weren't hard enough, one must have sure hands on the scalpel (or the mouse moving the scalpel) and steady hands on the drill to be successful. One problem with the game is that for every case that goes to surgery there are five to seven cases that don't require surgery. So one may have to go through seven cases before getting to a surgical candidate. After talking with Dr. Skelton at Toolworks General, there is a built-in fix to this. One can actually convert a nonsurgical patient into a surgical candidate by typing from the main hospital screen (after being paged to see a patient) the following key stokes to get the desired surgery case: CTRL-ALT # (where # = 0 (aneurysm repair), = 1 (brain tumor resection) and = 2 (subdural hematoma resection).

## Post-Operative Notes...

*Life & Death II: The Brain* is not simply humorous entertainment, but it has educational value as well. It will take players some time to absorb the fundamentals of neurological conditions and surgical techniques, but it is time well spent. **cgw**

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# Windows on the World of Games and Game Hardware

## *A Report on Spring Comdex and Windows World*

*by Paul Nielsen*







*Two of the latest announced CD products are Sony's Laser Library and Tandy's line of multi-media computers.*

For several spring days, Atlanta's Omni/World Congress Center was transformed into "*Windows World* Comdex Center." As usual, the Spring Comdex was a display of new technology *and* new games.

### CD-ROM

While there were no games demonstrated that ran from a CD-ROM, compact disk technology was displayed throughout *Windows World*. Several manufacturers were pushing for CD-ROM access times to improve. Regular readers of *CGW* will, of course, be expecting CD-ROMs to play an important part in tommorrow's mega-games.

### Hardware Headliners

On the hardware side, **Intel** announced a new chip — the 486sx — and **Roland**, **Creative Labs** and **Adlib** all showed how to make a PC sound better. CD-ROMs were also prevalent at several booths. Also, in a determined move toward better graphics, at least two video board makers displayed an improved VGA using the Edsun chip. In the software arena (developers take note), **Microsoft** just made it *easy* to write Windows programs.

### Visual BASIC

Programming for Windows has often proven as difficult as looking out one's bedroom windows with the storm shutters closed. Now, **Microsoft** is attempting to open those metaphorical shutters with their *Visual BASIC* development system for *Windows*. In *Visual BASIC* (*VB*), "event driven" meaning functions are applied to parts of the screen (icons, buttons, menus). The Windows' screens are first designed by simply drawing them using *VB*'s graphic interface. Code is then applied to the buttons to drive the actual action. *VB* may be just what the software industry has been needing to write games for *Windows*.

### The 486sx

While the 386sx has proven to be both the gamer's and the gamer's pocketbook's best friend, **Intel** is positioning the 486sx/20 to be next in the spotlight. While the 386sx suffers from having only half the memory I/O of the full 386dx, the 486sx is a full-fledged 486 sans math co-processor. It retains the 486's faster 386 instruction set, built-in memory manager, 8K high-speed cache memory and 32-bit I/O. The cost for the chip is $527. This is, of course, less than a full 486dx, yet the 20MHz version is expected to run about 10% faster than a full 33MHz 386dx. Why is Intel pushing the 486sx to replace the 386? Because AMD has recently been granted the right to produce and sell 386-compatible CPUs. The CPU war is on and the buyer is the winner.

### SoundBlaster Pro

Creative Labs upped the ante of PC sound at a crowded demonstration of the *SoundBlaster Pro*. It's the next-generation sound card and it is loaded! The operative word is "twice." It has twice the sound channels (22) of the original SoundBlaster with twice the quality of sound in stereo, as well as stereo DACs for digitized speech and sound effects. Then, to support the great games that will be requiring CD-ROM to hold all that


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sound and graphics, the SoundBlaster Pro has a built-in CD-ROM interface. Technically, it supports the Microsoft Windows Multimedia Extension Level 1. MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is also built in and Creative Labs ships it with a MIDI sequencer program to boot. It begins shipping in quantity this summer at a $299 price point.

### AdLib Gold

Not to be outdone by the *SoundBlaster* again, AdLib also debuted a new sound card at Spring Comdex. The AdLib Gold matches the SoundBlaster Pro feature for feature, but improves the DAC samplings from 8 bits to 12 bits for cleaner sound. The *Adlib Gold* will also be available this summer for about $300, but consumers will have to add $100 for the CD-ROM SCSI interface and some will have to pay an additional $100 for a Micro Channel bus version.

### The Edsun Chip

Perhaps the most exciting breakthrough in graphics is the Edsun chip. With the Edsun chip, a VGA card can display up to 749,504 colors, automatically smoothing out the graphics and anti-aliasing lines. Several VGA cards are now becoming available that already include the Edsun chip. Future software must include a driver to enable the graphic effects. Game developer kits are available from Edsun Labs for $250.

### The New Games

Drawing the most onlookers was the *Gunship 2000* demo. As noted in *CGW*'s "Winter CES Report," the game has been updated to include 256-color VGA and explosive support for sound cards. Overall, it's a much bigger game than *Gunship*: the player now controls a *squad* of choppers and the crew members gain skills as the team progresses. Desert Storm and Central European scenarios are included, as well as seven different choppers, to keep it accurate to the situation. The updated game also includes a campaign game and permits the player to edit and design missions. **MicroProse** is planning to ship *Gunship 2000* by August.

Those who read Paul Rigby's "Over There" column in *CGW* already know that *Corporation* by **Virgin Mastertronic** is a science fiction role-playing game, exploring the halls of a corporation doing genetic research that's gone bad. Of course, security is high and the corporation's facility is patrolled by several armed robots and trick holograms. The player can choose from several types of armor and more gadgets than Mr. Bond has. *Corporation*'s screens looked good, but most of the action in the pre-beta game was in long halls and empty rooms. The interface sports a mouse area that controls turning, movement and speed — it seems awkward at first, but eventually provides more agility than most games.

Another game worthy of note is *Conan*. **Virgin Mastertronic** announced the product at Winter CES, but is now demonstrating what the game is really going to be. It combines a top view similar to *Ultima* but shifts to a side view during combat. Conan learns fancier sword-play as the game progresses, making it easier on the player to learn to control Conan during the complex sword battles. **CGW**

## Waiting for the...CD

*(Continued from page 14)*

terface. This is represented by *Detectron*'s three-button interface, the large pop-up command buttons in *Adventures of Willy Beamish*, the "power meter" in **Accolade**'s *Mike Ditka Power Football*, the addition of an icon-based inventory in *The Secret of Monkey Island II*, **Interplay**'s *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary* game (in which the starship's controls pop up in half-bright windows so that none of the bridge background and action is lost) and the *Ultimate* simplified interface, *Ultima VII*'s two-button interface. The latter uses the left mouse button as an analog to the player character's feet and the right button as an analog to his/her hands. If one wants to go somewhere, the cursor is placed on the location and the left button is clicked. If one wants to use something, the cursor is placed on the object and the right button is pushed. The entire command structure has been reduced to these two commands.

The other trend toward simplifying the interface is to concur with the sentiments expressed in last issue's designer notes ("The Graphics *Are* The Interface" — *CGW* #84, p. 64) and create images on the screen that will make the interface transparent. In the article, the author suggested that each button on a spaceship's console should be active. In **Data East**'s *UltraBots* and near-future armored battle game, the consoles are active buttons. For example, if one wants to increase a tank's speed, the cursor is placed on the throttle image and pushed so that it looks like the throttle is being pushed forward. Also, in **Three-Sixty**'s *MegaFortress* and **Dynamix**'s *A-10E* upgrade, weapons are loaded by literally placing the images or designations of the weaponry to be loaded on the photo or diagram of the plane itself. Each one of these approaches is designed to simultaneously make the interface more intuitive and suspend the player's disbelief.

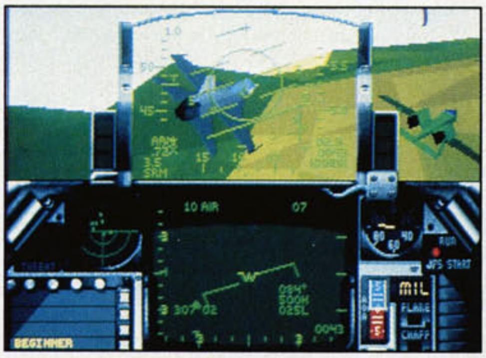


*Strike Commander*

### His Master's Voice

Another trend which underlines the need for CD storage is the inclusion of digitized voices in products. Naturally, CD products such as **NEC**'s *J.B. Harold: Murder Club*, which features four hours of digitized voice, and **ICOM**'s *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective* use digitized voices to convey the dialogue, but other products are dabbling in speech, as well.

**Spectrum Holobyte**'s *Crisis in the Kremlin*, a geopolitical game of economic, diplomatic and political strategy designed in conjunction with a developer who grew up in the Soviet Union, enables players to relive their simulated regimes via an on-screen TV monitor view with digitized speech commentary. One can even save this report as a VCR file. In addition, *Falcon 3.0* uses digitized speech for some of the threat warnings coming from "other" pilots in one's squadron. **Bethesda Softworks**' *The Terminator* uses digitized speech in the opening credits and the victory screen. **Accolade**'s *Mike Ditka Power Football* uses digitized speech (but not Mike's), as well as 256-color VGA digitized images to help convey the excitement and urgency of a professional football team's sideline. **Cine-**



Falcon 3.0

**Play**'s *Detectron* will use a mixture of digitized speech and text conversation balloons to handle the conversations in its story.

Lord British shared with *CGW* that *Ultima VII* will use digitized speech for a focused dramatic effect. The *Ultimate* "bad guy" will speak audibly in the game as though speaking directly into the player's mind. He said that the design team had learned just how much memory it takes to have digitized speech throughout as they continued to work on the *Ultima VI* CD versions.

With so much digitized sound in the offing, one can expect to see new and more effective use of speech in the near future.

## Re: Action

Action gamers will see plenty of the traditional horizontal scrolling games in the next six months. Whether it is the physical logic puzzles of Disney's *Hare Raising Havoc*, the traps to be set in the clever *Home Alone* game from **Capstone** (the player sets the traps in the first part of the game and watches the bungling burglars get theirs in the second part of the game), the non-stop trouble-making of Bart Simpson in **Konami**'s *The Simpsons* arcade game (based on the cartridge game), **Psygnosis**' *Barbarian II* (not to be confused with **Palace Software**'s earlier effort of the same name released by **Epyx**) or **Konami**'s *Back to the Future III* game, there is plenty of action. **Ocean** even has a charming little jumping/scrolling game called *Elf* that looks like a beautifully rendered *Mario Brothers* derivative in which the characters have the ability to use "spells." It is a very pretty game with 256-color VGA graphics.

Add to these titles the *Cinemaware*-style action of **Konami**'s *Riders of Rohan* (Tolkien with action sequences), **U.S. Gold**'s three-dimensional arcade stylings for their first *The Godfather* action game and **Bethesda Softworks**'s *The Terminator* with its first-person immediacy and the scope is enlarged even further.

Yet even with traditional action games, the lines between action games and simulations are becoming more blurred all the time. **Psygnosis**' *Armour-Geddon* has already been released on the Amiga and is soon to be released on the IBM. This fast-moving polygon-filled technology enables players to challenge the computer or another human player (via direct connect) in a scavenger hunt for four pieces of an ultimate weapon. Players fly stealth bombers and fighters, hovercraft and helicopters or drive heavy and light tanks in this literal "arms race." There are strategic elements as well, but the big surprise is that **Psygnosis** plans to distribute a joystick with two serial ports so controllers can be daisy-chained. In this way, one joystick could act as the throttle of a helicopter while the other controls the collective — adding considerably to an intense gaming experience.

**Ocean** is releasing a polygon-filled action game, as well. Their new *Robocop 3* was designed by the same developers who created *F-29 Retaliator*. It is a first-person point-of-view game that puts the player inside the "Robocop" of film fame. The company is working closely enough with the film company that they update scenes in the arcade sequences immediately after the film footage is developed and placed "in the can." **U. S. Gold**'s *Cybercon III* places the player inside an intelligent machine, as well, and features a futuristic polygon-filled environment that combines combat and puzzles. In addition, **Konami** is featuring three-dimensional graphics in their budget-priced ($19.95) movie-based shoot-'em-up, *Predator 2*.

One of the most exciting action games due out on a home entertainment machine may be *Escape From Cyber City* on CD-I. This is actually a revision of the award-winning *Freedom Fighter* coin-op game on laserdisc. Arcade owners had trouble with the original Japanimation-style shoot-'em-up because of the track-jumping required of laserdisc programs. The track-jumping tended to throw the machines out of alignment and this, in turn, created extra maintenance charges. The CD-I game features a system which requires *no* track-jumping, so players will not have to worry about having to repair their new CD-I machines.

## On a Role

Role-playing continues to be one of the healthiest genres in sales and the rest of 1991 looks like it will be consistent with past history. **New World Computing** was showing its graphically intense *Might and Magic III* product (previewed in *CGW* #83) and first science-fiction role-playing game, *Planet's Edge*. Both games were described in an earlier CES report, but should be shipping by the time this issue hits the newsstands and mailboxes. **Mindcraft** was showcasing *The Magic Candle II* (as previewed in *CGW* #84) and it should be shipping in the same window as the **New World** products. **Origin** was demonstrating its imminent *Martian Dreams* game described in an earlier CES report and preparing to raise the curtain on *Ultima VII*. The latest *Ultima* deals with *Ultimate* evil and is the beginning of a darker trilogy than previous efforts. The latest product will feature no tiled graphics, full-screen (edge-to-edge) graphics and the simplified interface described earlier.

Some new players are entering the role-playing arena. **Live Studios** is working on *DreamWeb*, a fascinating concept for adventuring in the subconscious. The Jungian adventure will probably be released early in 1992. In the minds of most computer gamers, **Koei Corporation** is almost synonymous with the strategy genre, even though most of their products have had strong role-playing elements. In *Uncharted Waters*, a role-playing game *a la* the classic *Seven Cities of Gold*, players become 16th century explorers. Trading goods, gambling, upgrading equipment, exploring the unknown reflected in the title and encountering new diplomatic situations are the major role-playing activities in the game.

**Konami** is making a major entry into the computer role-playing field. Most exciting to "pen and paper" role-playing gamers is their release of the *Champions* role-playing system in a series of computer games. The event-driven superhero game features plenty of strategy and story for any fan of comic art.

In addition, **Konami**'s latest *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game will be a full-fledged role-playing game, complete with inventories and attributes. Those who do not like arcade-style combat will be somewhat disappointed, however. The publisher even plans to market a *Mission: Impossible* role-playing game. **Konami** is also *distributing Spacewrecked*, the so-called "*Dungeon Master* in space" from Europe's **Gremlin Software**. Originally released as *BSS Jane Seymour* (and discussed by *CGW*'s Paul Rigby in Issue #77), the game is virtually *Alien* meets *Dungeon Master*. Another **Konami** CRPG for this year, *Bloodwych*, is a dual-play dungeon romp from Europe.

Another European product that is making its way over to U.S. shores is **U.S. Gold**'s *Knights of the Crystallion* (only available on the Amiga). In addition to the standard arcade action used to resolve combat in European games, this one features memory games, strategy games and economic strategy to challenge the player on a mental, as well as reflex, level.

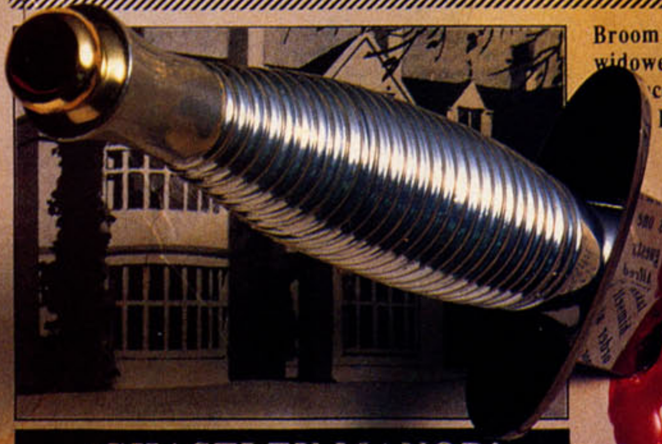
**Interplay** has been extremely aggressive in producing products for this marketplace. *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary* not only features 3-D ship-to-ship space combat, but about thirty worlds to explore, with each trip analogous to an episode of the television show. Some aspects of the game play seem more analogous to a **Sierra** graphic adventure than a traditional **Interplay** product, but Mike Stackpole created much of the story, so there will be plenty of the classic **Interplay** flavor in the plotline. *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* builds on the success of their original *Lord of the Rings* product. **Interplay** has paid considerable attention to both professional critics and consumer feedback. So they are enhancing the new game with an improved interface, the addition of automapping and a certain amount of creative risk. The latter is the addition of cliffhangers, a dramatic tool

*(Continued onpage 88)*

# WE SET THE SCENE...NOW YOU SOLVE THE...

# MURDER!

19TH JUNE 1941



## 'GHASTLEY MANOR' THE LOCATION OF HORRIFYING HOMICIDE

Police have today been informed of the murder of Mr Charles Innes, aged 46, an attorney from Barrington, W. Sussex. It is believed Mr Innes was stabbed to death at the home of Mrs Audrey Broom-Hall, actress & widower of the famous film …cer Sebastian Broom-Hall; who was holding a cocktail party for the rich & famous. As one of the guests Lord Alfred Andrews has taken it upon himself to keep order at Ghastley Manor, he is ques…ing Mr Larry Glover, th… prominent political fig… & Dr Victor Jones: N… Scotland Yard have y… reach the scene of the c…, but they are estim…d to arrive at approx. 1… – 2 hours after the cr… was discovered.



## DISTINGUISHED PEER HAS 2 HOURS TO FIND THE KILLER...!

Lord Alfred Andrews has only 2 hours to try and solve the murder of Mr Charles Innes who was attending a cocktail party at 'Ghastley Manor'.
He reports, "Things are not quite as I initially thought. The guests are entwined with love affairs, disputes over inheritance & outbursts of jealous rage."
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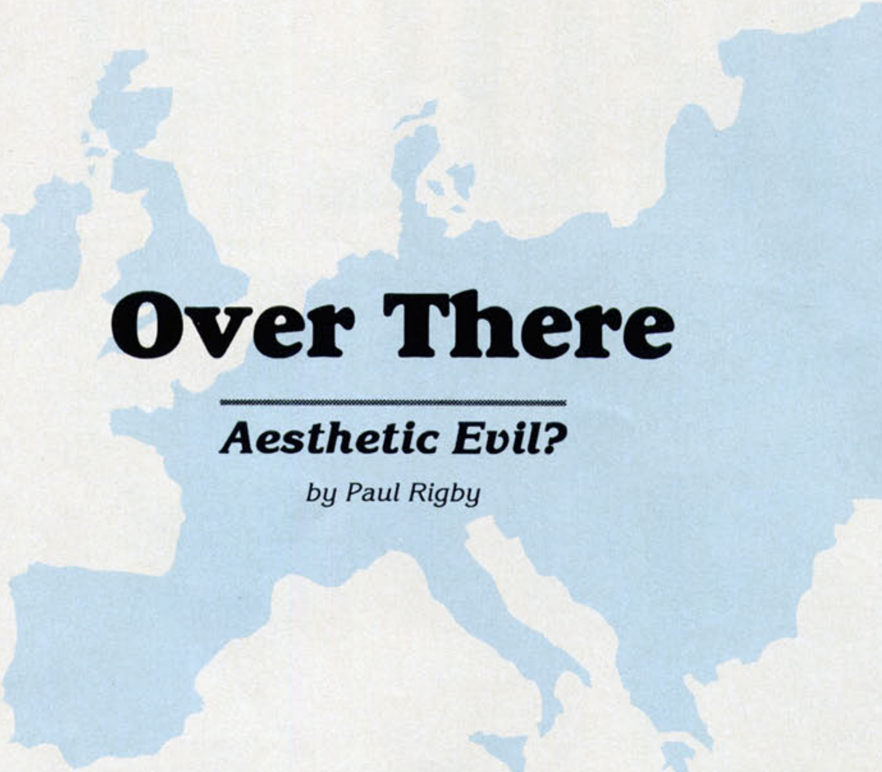





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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.



# Over There

## *Aesthetic Evil?*

*by Paul Rigby*

Available from July for Amigas (1 MB required) is **Electronic Arts UK**'s *Birds of Prey*. Coded by **Argonaut** (developers of *Starglider* and *Starglider 2*) and originally code-named "Hawk," this new flight simulation has been under development for four years.

### Winged Argonauts

*Birds of Prey* is being touted as "the most realistic flight simulator published on a home computer to date." The player has forty (yes, *forty*) planes to choose from, ranging from MiG-29s through European SAABs and Tornados and on to the latest designs from the U.S. manufacturers, such as the Rockwell B1 and the F-117A. Every plane has, apparently, been thoroughly researched to represent flight dynamics, performance, weaponry, radar systems and targets featured in the game in graphic detail as accurately as possible. Argonaut has taken a different approach in the quest for "realism." Instead of implementing strict performance limits on each aircraft, the program uses complex mathematics to calculate the realistic maximum velocity and aerodynamics, etc. In effect, the program simulates the atmosphere surrounding the aircraft and how it acts upon the aerodynamic surfaces of each aircraft rather than simulating the aircraft itself.

There are 12 mission types that may be selected, from Aerial Interception and Bomb Runs to Troop Drops, Test Flights of experimental aircraft and Aerial Reconnaissance. The game is set in an entirely fictitious scenario — the programming team being conscious not to offend potential customers with any reference to the recent Gulf conflict. Mission types are open-ended with unlimited possibilities and variations. Pilot records *can* be saved to disk, but, due to the dynamic nature of the programming, rarely will a pilot be able to fly the same mission twice. Being set in the "real world," both sides are constantly active. Thus, enemy planes actually roll out of their hangars, trundle across runways and take off. Bombed buildings and airfields will gradually be repaired and become fully operational again. Ground-based forces move across desert plains or green fields and carriers and warships steam ever onward toward their destinations... time actually passes as the game progresses. PC and ST versions will follow the Amiga release later this year.

### *Falcon* Meets CDTV

*Falcon*, most beloved of flight simulations, is to appear on the CDTV. Developed by **Rowan Software**, the format of this (so far) six-month project will be as follows: the original *Falcon* simulation will appear more or less as a training scenario while the two mission disks will form the actual competitive game. Three games in one, no less! The graphics of the three "modules" will remain the same, although there will be some interesting improvements. For example, during the development of *Flight of the Intruder*, this correspondent was fortunate enough to hear and record a number of real-life recordings of the flight tapes from a variety of missions and aircraft during the Vietnam war. Dramatic, and often tragic, these tapes formed part of the research process for *Intruder*. These same recordings, along with more recent information, have been used to produce the CD-quality radio chatter (spoken by four or five actors) heard whilst playing *Falcon*.

### "Can the Chatter!"

**Rowan** boss Rod Hyde said, "This radio chatter will be added to the basic 20 messages found in the computer game. It is amazing how the radio chatter adds to the atmosphere. There are about 50 different stories in all. It means that you will have radio traffic about half the time. It will be up to you to pick out those mes-






Falcon CDTV




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sages that are meaningful and those messages that are just chaff. We are still getting the CD cut for those sequences. However, for testing purposes we do have a CD with messages from the film *Top Gun*, although they are totally unrelated to the game. You'll be flying along and suddenly hear Tom Cruise ejecting, for example."

At the beginning of the game is a special welcome/introduction briefing. "We are getting together a number of video sequences, so you may see a Falcon fly-by while you are being welcomed to the base and being told what you are supposed to be doing. Many of the video sequences are sourced directly from Gilman Louie [**Spectrum Holobyte** boss]. So, you'll see a typical briefing room (this will be artwork) with the backs of people's heads as though you're one of them. You will also see an video screen with the film (digitized video) running plus the audio associated with it."

Other video clips include introductions to the F-16 in general, air-to-ground weapons, air-to-air weapons, external stores, enemy recognition, a briefing on the overall training session, the Falcon itself and the two principal missions. There are ten briefings in all, some of which may include video stills. Rowan hope to have a total of 40-50 minutes of audio on the disk. Available on the CDTV mid-1991.

## Flight Sims Made Easy From MicroProse

*Air Duel* is **MicroProse UK**'s latest release. It is a simple, action-packed flight simulation based almost entirely on a series of dogfights and conspicuously lacking any complicated controls or similar features associated with other **MicroProse** efforts. Designed by Glynn Williams, the chap behind the SF action game *Warhead*, it has its roots in a game called *Fokker* that Glynn began working on a while back. That was a WWI flight simulation based upon encounters between Sopwith Camels and Fokker Triplanes over the trenches during 1917. *Air Duel* is a greatly expanded version, retaining the wizard kites but adding three other classic dogfights from different time periods. For example, there is a WWII air encounter over the Pacific starring Wildcats and Zeros, a present-day affair featuring the F-18 Hornet and the MiG-29 Fulcrum in a Gulf War scenario and a futuristic combat sequence set in space(!). Available on all 16-bit formats during mid-1991.

**Note:** The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:

Computer Adventure World, 318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L7 0EY. Telephone: 01144-51-263-6306.

Miles Better Software, 219/221 Cannock Road, Chadsmoor, Cannock, Staffordshire, England, WS11 2DD. Telephone: 01144-543-466-577/8/80 Fax: 01144-543-466-579.

Premier Mail Order, Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins Square, Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ. Telephone: 01144-268-590-766 Fax: 01144-268-590-076.

All of the above telephone numbers assume you can dial direct. If you have any trouble, contact the international operator. **cgw**









## Waiting for the...CD

*(Continued from page 14)*

used to improve the pacing of a storyline in other media. Tolkien used cliffhangers regularly in the trilogy, but this is somewhat unusual for a role-playing game and we are anxious to see how they accomplish it.

Latent computer role-playing designers will be most excited about *The Bard's Tale Construction Set*. This handy-dandy tool kit will enable computer game designers to create stories with the "look and feel" of the successful CRPG series. Games created with the tool kit may be played as stand-alones and the product comes with a mini-dungeon. Along with **Electronic Arts**' upcoming release of *Bard's Tale IV*, this product should guarantee computer game immortality for the series.

Immortality seems to be the order of the day for **Strategic Simulations, Inc.**'s "Gold Box" series of *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* products, as well. With *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*, **SSI** begins a new series with a brand new design team. The story revolves around a desert caravan and should feature monsters unlike those in previous "Gold Box" efforts. Immortality does *not* seem to be in order for the Commodore 64, however. *Gateway to the Savage Frontier* will be the *last* "Gold Box" game on that platform.

**Sir-Tech Software** unveiled the latest offering in the *Wizardry* series, *Crusaders of the Dark Savant*. This time the VGA graphics use the full 256-color palette; the game can be 100% mouse-driven and inventory handling has been cleaned up via automatic equipping and unequipping. Character creation has considerable depth with plenty of options; players can choose from 42 different character portraits and the magic system has been revamped to reflect a more medieval understanding of "elemental" powers. Perhaps most unique is the fact that the game can begin in any of four locations. Depending on which of the three endings a player reached in *Bane of the Cosmic Forge*, the story will proceed from that situation. There is a fourth beginning for those who have not yet played *Bane*. Players will also compete against computer-operated parties in trying to get the artifacts needed to complete the quest, adding a sense of urgency to the game's pacing.

Sequels are also on tap at **Accolade**. In addition to the adventure sequel *Les Manley — Lost in L. A.*, the publisher is releasing *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus*. The matinee mistress has been kidnapped, and the player's character will have to explore three different film sets (levels?) in order to harvest enough clues to avoid an unhappy Halloween for the lewd and lovely lady of darkness. One interesting facet of the interface is particularly appropriate to the genre. Whenever the player's character loses hit points, the flesh begins to fall off the body profile. Somehow, it just seems appropriate.

The creator of *Traveller* and *Twilight 2000*, Marc Miller, has worked considerably more closely with the programmers at **Paragon Software** on their latest role-playing games. *MegaTraveller 2* allows players to portray either human or Vargr characters in a search for ancient artifacts. The character's race and world of origin will make a definite difference in the type of physical characteristics and/or skills he/she can have. *MegaTraveller 2* will feature so many different worlds (117) and so many different encounters that it will be possible to simply go back into the game and explore *after* one has already reached one of several levels of victory in the game. Combat is much improved.

*Twilight 2000*, the role-playing game set in a near-future semi-World War III universe, takes a very different tack. One creates a character via an elegant and sophisticated character generation routine, accepts an assignment and even participates in combat between polygon-filled vehicles. Much of the game *looks* like a simulation, but battles are determined by the role-playing skills of the character, not the reflexes of the player.

### The Boys Are Back (Wargames)

The good news for wargamers is that the genre isn't "quite dead, yet." In fact, there were so many wargame titles bandied about the CES floor that it looks like reports of the genre's death may have been greatly exaggerated. A new Canadian company called **Ninga** is publishing a simple wargame called *Civil War*. It looks like it plays at about the difficulty level of **Avalon Hill**'s early boardgame *Waterloo*. Speaking of **Avalon Hill**, their *Third Reich* game looks very polished on the Atari ST. The AI is designed to be very aggressive, however.

Another new player is **Quantum Quality Products** with *The Perfect General* and *The Lost Admiral*. The former features abstract armored combat in a fast-moving game from the designer of *Empire* and the latter features *Empire*-style naval combat with some new wrinkles. In fact, **Ubisoft** has developed a game called *Battle Isle* that allows two players to fight battles on the same computer screen in a game that looks like one of the scenarios in *The Perfect General*.

**Broderbund** is also publishing some wargames. The Winter CES report covered *Ancient Art of War in the Skies*. In addition, Chris Crawford's *Patton Strikes Back* features fabulous map graphics and some of the most entertaining historical anecdotes ever when units reach certain destinations on the map.

**Koei Corporation** was very quiet during the past year, but the next six to eight months will see several releases. In addition to *Uncharted Waters*, the role-playing game mentioned earlier, the company will release *Romance of the Three Kingdoms II* (complete with **AdLib** sound support, mouse-driven interface, ability to charge, capacity to overrun and incendiary attack), *L'Empereur* (a Napoleonic campaign game where players can attack by land *or* sea) and *Liberty or Death!* (the **Koei** version of the American Revolution). Early 1992 will see the debut of a World War II game using the **Koei** system.



*Planet's Edge*

**Three-Sixty Pacific** is working on several new wargames. *Patriot* is a land-based equivalent to *Harpoon*. Their design goal is to place players in the role of "Commander of Theater" and enable one to give orders and examine every unit from corp to company *without* forcing the player to be responsible for seeing that every attack is prosecuted. Another "wargame" is *Theater of War*, an abstract game of conflict which may be more analogous to chess than traditional wargames with units, leaders and armament. The publisher is also working on a World War II version of *Harpoon* with Jim Dunnigan as consultant.

Finally, **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** has always been synonymous with wargames. The company has recently taken responsibility for distribution back from **Electronic Arts Distribution** and expects wargame sales to increase. This year will see *Western Front*, Gary Grigsby's sequel to the critically acclaimed *Second Front* and next year's schedule may see an *African Front* game. They also plan to publish Ed Bever's *No Greater Glory*, an American Civil War game (using an enhanced version of his *Revolution '76* design).

### While You Wait (Conclusion)

Next issue, we'll comment on some of the adventure, simulation and strategy games that were announced at this year's CES. Those who feel like they are still standing in the cab queue can meditate for a moment on this ironic anecdote. Two years ago at Winter CES, one industry insider jokingly observed that *CGW* had focused so narrowly on floppy disk-based entertainment that, within two years, we would be able to cover a CES show in an hour and a half. Now, it is that industry insider who is trying to survive and *CGW* is still trying to cover the huge world of entertainment software as we wait for that low-cost, high-volume CD platform that will launch us into the next era of computerized entertainment. **CGW**

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*Circle Reader Service #24*

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- A = Excellent
- B = Above Average
- C = Average
- D = Below Average
- F = Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

**Demographics**

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age (in years)?

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?

(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in descending order of use).

- 1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
- 2 = Amiga
- 3 = Apple 8 bit
- 4 = Apple IIgs
- 5 = Atari ST
- 6 = Atari 8 bit
- 7 = C-64/128
- 8 = Macintosh
- 9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

- 1 = Less than 2 hours
- 2 = 2-5 hours
- 3 = 6-10 hours
- 4 = 11-20 hours
- 5 = 21-30 hours
- 6 = 31+ hours

4. What is your sex ("M" or "F")?

**Games**

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6. M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse)
7. Ultima VI (Origin)
8. Harpoon (Three-Sixty Pacific)
9. SimCity (Maxis)
10. Warlords (SSG)
11. Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
12. Red Baron (Dynamix)
13. Railroad Tycoon (MicroProse)
14. Wing Commander (Origin)
15. Flight Simulator 4.0 (Microsoft)
16. Elvira (Accolade)
17. Rise of the Dragon (Sierra)
18. Conflict: Middle East (SSI)
19. Space Quest IV (Sierra)
20. Knights of the Sky (MicroProse)
21. Medieval Lords (SSI)
22. TV Sport Basketball (Cinemaware)
23. Leisure Suit Larry III (Sierra)
24. Deathtrack (Activision)
25. Nuclear War (New World)
26. Police Quest II (Sierra)
27. Lemmings (Psygnosis)
28. Red Storm Rising (MicroProse)
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33. Champions of Krynn (SSI)
34. Carrier Command (Microplay)
35. Flight of the Intruder (Spectrum Holobyte)
36. It Came From the Desert (Cinemaware)
37. Sword of the Samurai (MicroProse)
38. Battles of Napoleon (SSI)

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## Conversions Received



*Centurion: Defender of Rome* (**Electronic Arts**) Amiga

*Battle Chess* (**Interplay**) Macintosh

*Bandit Kings of Ancient China* (**Koei**) Amiga

*The Secret of Monkey Island* (**Lucasfilm**) Amiga

*Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon* (**MicroProse**) Macintosh

*Lemmings* (**Psygnosis**) IBM

*Bane of the Cosmic Forge* (**Sir-Tech**) Macintosh

*Renegade Legion: Interceptor* (**SSI**) Amiga

# Taking a Peek

(Continued from page 8)

**Ubi Soft**
France

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2: While it still requires the same level of finely honed arcade reflexes (just to hit the ball back over the net) as the original, much has been added to this worthy sequel. Female opponents are included (and play differently than their male counterparts), four-player capability has been added, as have different court surfaces. Player "characters" can be created by selecting attributes which can be improved through both training and playing (creating something akin to a role-playing campaign adventure in tennis). Even statistical analysis of gameplay is included! *Pro Tennis Tour 2* is a most ambitious package. *[Ed: Of course, past and simulated performance is no guarantee of future success.]* Amiga ($49.95). Circle Service #11.

**U.S. Gold**
San Jose, CA

THE GOLD OF THE AZTECS: This game features basic two-dimensional arcade game action, but it excels at what it does. It features more detailed animation, more action and more music. Also, as experienced gamers would expect, there are plenty of fights, death and mayhem included as the player searches for the famed tomb of Quetzalcoatl and the riches buried there. IBM, Amiga ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #12.

ROTOX: A new angle on an old idea, *Rotox* puts the player in the body of a cyborg zapping everything that moves and walking tightropes, all controlled from a top-down perspective. Ten "theme" levels of destruction feature continually improving weaponry and contain "keys" to further levels. Players will do a lot of "falling" while learning the "tight"ropes, too. IBM, Amiga ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

VAXINE: An anti-viral *Fantastic Voyage* gone arcade game, *Vaxine* courses the player through the President's veins in an attempt to stop a terrible virus. Fast action (and reflexes) are required to stop "enemy" cells from multiplying by hitting them with correspondingly colored bullets. The wrong color only makes them multiply! Lots of arcade goodies for you scroll-around-and-shoot-fans. IBM, Amiga ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #14.

WORLD CLASS SOCCER: Soccer lovers will have much more to cheer about here in the States. The gameplay blends strategic placement of players across the field with a requirement of optimal use of their individual tactical expertise. In *World Class Soccer*, shipped in Europe under a different title, anything from a single match to the World Cup championship tournament itself can be played. The game includes the 24 actual teams from the 1990 World Cup series, and rates each of their 20 players. Naturally, games are resolved via traditional arcade-style action where "the man closest to the ball" becomes the "active" player. Game length can be customized by gamers to last anywhere from 45 seconds to over two minutes. The documentation is a treasure trove of soccer information, statistics and trivia. IBM, Amiga ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

**Walt Disney Software**
Burbank, CA

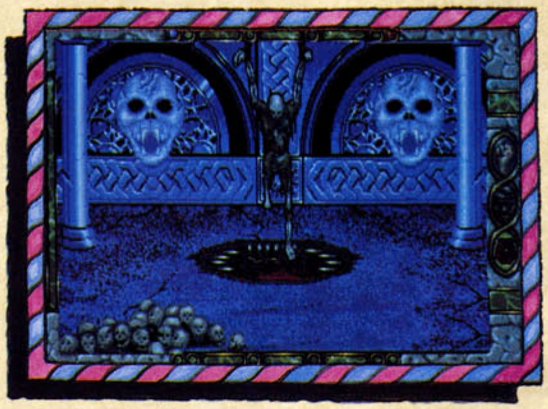
ARACHNOPHOBIA: This "horror"-filled action game provides a polished presentation and "story"-driven wrap for what is basically a straightforward, simple arcade game. *Arachnophobia* is loosely based on the Touchstone film of the same name. The player is one of Delbert's exterminators going from town to town, spraying spiders in an attempt to eliminate the "queen" spider in each town. The ultimate destination is South America where the player engages in a "once and for all" arcade battle. The game supports Disney's Sound Source and includes a charming 100+ page novel based on the movie screenplay. IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #16. **CGW**




# SOMET
# O







The greatest hero for the Hyborean Age was a fierce barbarian born of the harsh northlands,

**CONAN THE CIMMERIAN**

You have heard the tales of Conan's adventures. Only now will you have the opportunity to live the life of this fierce barbarian from the land of Hyborea.

Our odyssey begins with murder most foul. When Conan's village is massacred by the ravening hordes of Thoth Amon, high priest of the vile cult of Set, Conan vows to avenge the death of his family and friends.

In your search for vengeance, you as Conan, will explore Hyborea to seek out its hidden secrets and learn of its powers. Visit over 200 locations – taverns and inns, crypts and dungeons, temples and tombs, lavish homes and poor hovels – to learn the mysteries of Hyborea's sorceries to help Conan overcome its many natural and supernatural perils.

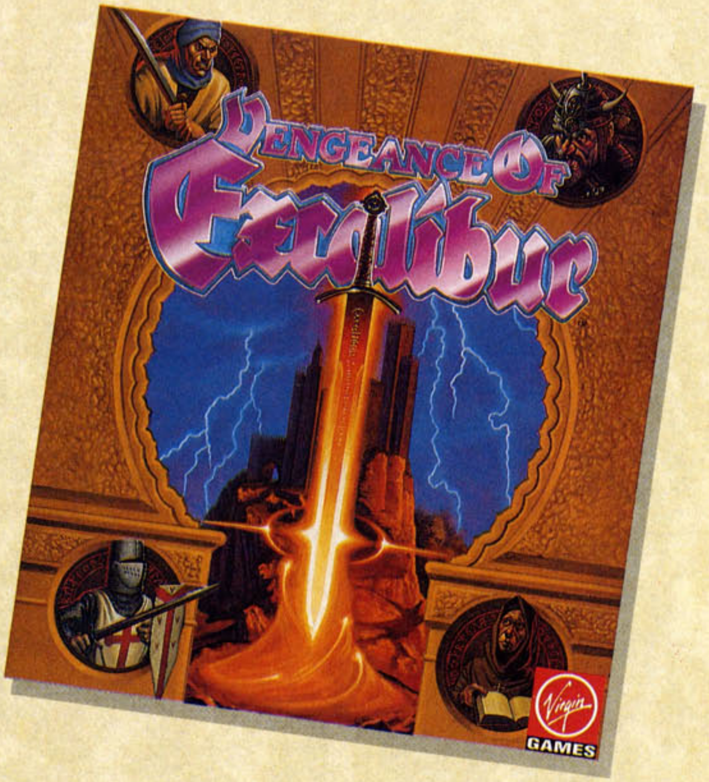
Only with luck, courage and constant struggle will Conan have the chance to force a reckoning with the powerful Thoth Amon.

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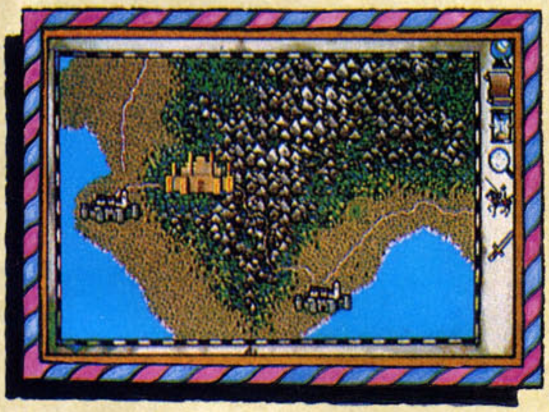

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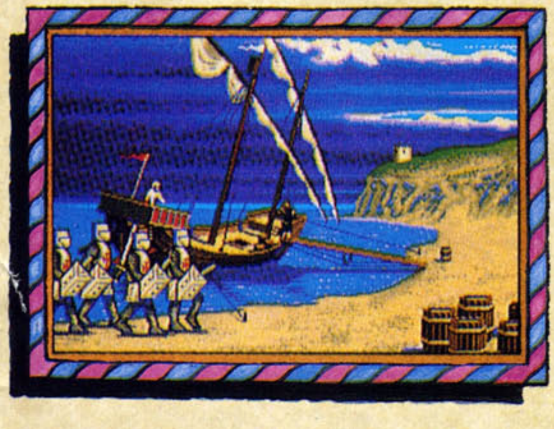
# THING
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In Spirit of Excalibur, the Knights of the Round Table fought to defend medieval Britain from the evil sorceress, Morgan Le Fay. Morgan, dabbling in dark arts beyond even her ability to control, had summoned a great Lord of Demons, the Shadowmaster.

With Morgan's death, the Shadowmaster was freed to work his evil will against the unprepared folk of Britain. Striking in the night, he imprisoned the King with a spell, stole the greatest treasures of the realm and kidnapped Nineve, the court enchantress. With the loss of the sword Excalibur and the newly recovered Holy Grail, Britain begins to sicken and die. The Shadowmaster must be stopped!

Command knights and whatever followers they are able to recruit to track the Shadowmaster through hazardous, beautiful and mysterious medieval Spain. Explore the hundreds of villages and cities, fortresses and castles, dungeons and palaces and all the secret places where the Shadowmaster may dwell.

Seek what aid you can as you acquire and learn the use of the sorceries of Moorish Spain, for only with the aid of enchantments and the loyalty of strong allies will you stand a chance of ridding the world of the demonic Shadowmaster once and for all.

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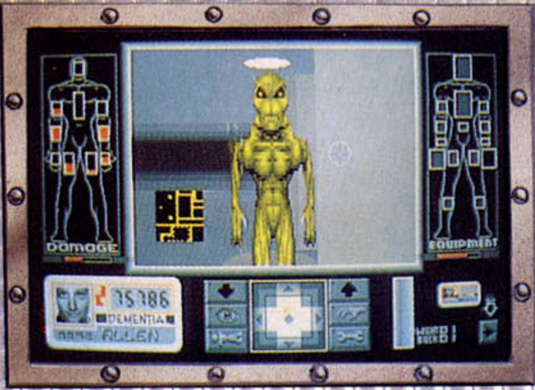

# SOMET
# NE

ALSO TAKING OVER A SEGA GENESIS NEAR YOU THIS FALL










**ARE YOU TOUGH ENOUGH TO TAKE ON THE 21st CENTURY AND SAVE MANKIND FROM HIS UNTIMELY DESTRUCTION BY A GENETICALLY ENGINEERED WAR MACHINE?!?**

Talk about your work-related stress! As a ZODIAC special agent, your job is to crack the complex security systems of the Universal Cybernetics Corporation and track down the mutant robot they have designed as the ultimate killing machine.

You'll arm yourself with a whole arsenal of weapons – everything from hologram projectors to special vision enhancement visors to thermal infra-red image intensifiers. If all else fails – you'll have to rely on your own psychic powers!

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- 360 degree vision
- Environmental sound effects

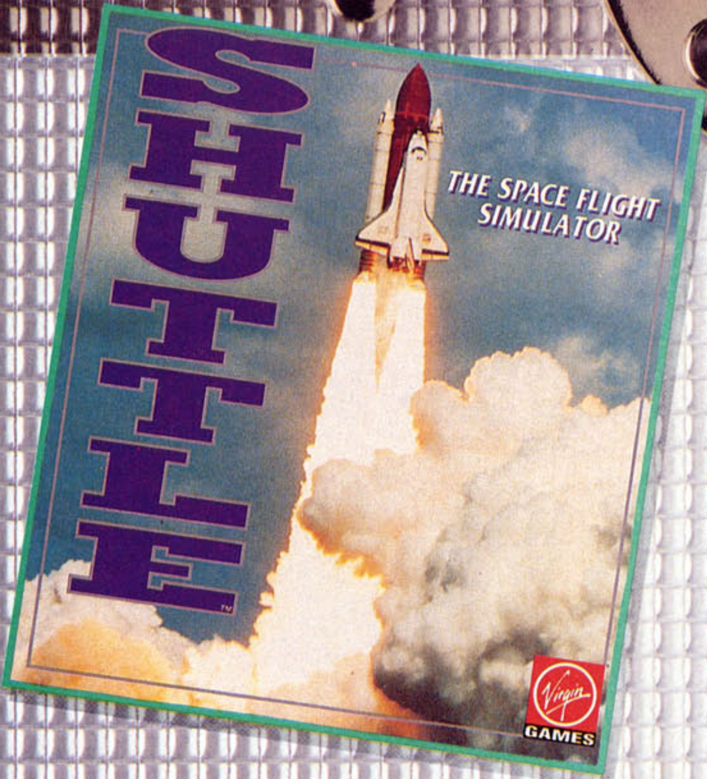
"Tension and unease, with danger lurking around every corner.... This Number One European Hit will keep you on your toes and coming back for more."

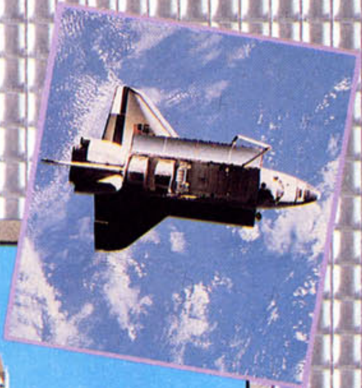
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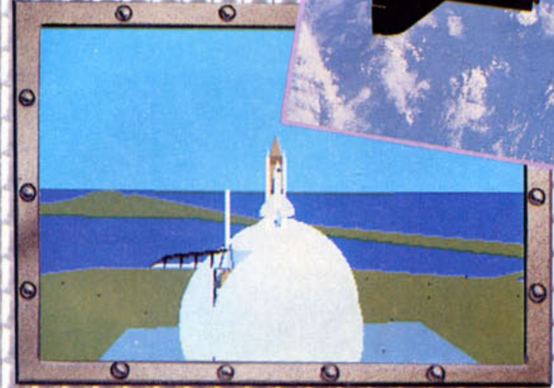
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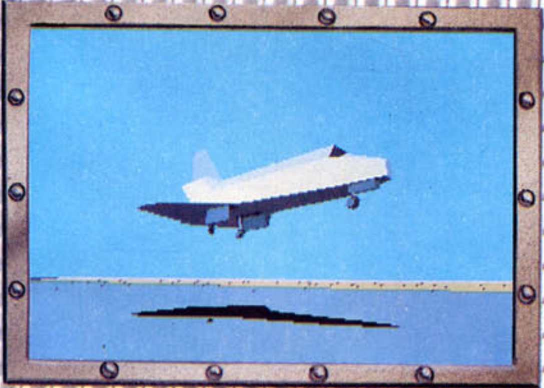




**The space flight simulator to end all simulators, SHUTTLE is the most accurate and comprehensive simulation of NASA's Space Shuttle ever produced for the home computer.**

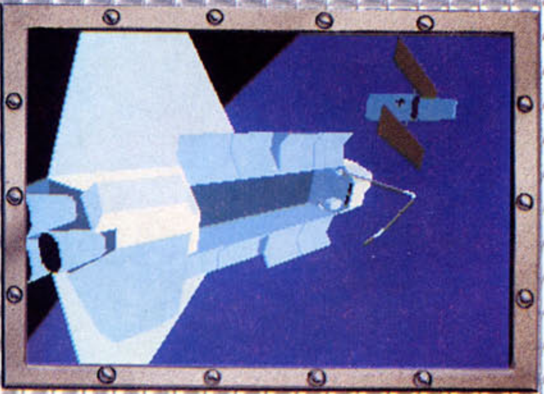
**With the aid of Mission Control, you will master such challenges as deploying and repairing satellites, launching spy satellites, maneuvering your craft in zero gravity, attaining the correct re-entry trajectory, and pulling off complicated landings.**



**Advanced polygon and elliptical graphics, along with actual land and star maps were used to create the breathtaking 3D panoramas of the Orbiter and its environment, which can be viewed from any angle at any time.**

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*Circle Reader Service #68*

# A Large Toolkit for Computer Game Design

**State of the Magazine:** Summer is an exciting time in the computer game industry and everyone in entertainment software publishing pulls out all the stops to get those important fall releases into the marketplace. This month, we share our initial impressions of the Consumer Electronics Show and begin our genre-by-genre synopsis of games which should be on the shelves by Christmas. In addition, we offer a sneak preview of the latest Chuck Yeager product from **Electronic Arts**, *Yeager Air Combat*. We hope our readers finish this issue with the feeling that there are hot games on their way for every taste.

**State of the Industry:** Summer CES brought to our minds one of the hardest lessons for some of us to learn. That lesson is that using the right tool can improve the job performance whereas using the wrong tool can actually undermine the task at hand. This editor managed to literally destroy some of the nuts and bolts on his childhood bicycle because he didn't realize that using pliers instead of socket wrenches actually ruined the nuts.

So it is with the computer game designer. Tool capability is an integral part of the design process. If designers have the capacity to use scanned art, our games will look prettier. If they have better audio sampling, they will sound more realistic. If object-oriented programming increases efficiency and enables the programmer to have more freedom to concentrate on other things, our games may get more sophisticated. If data storage becomes significantly larger, so can the complexity of either the games themselves and/or the audio-visual presentation of the games.

For the last few years, some computer game designers have said that CD-ROM will cause a decline in computer game quality due to slow access to data and increased production costs to meet higher graphic and audio expectations. Many have pointed to the disastrous maintenance costs associated with coin-op laserdisc machines in the arcades and move from that association to suggest that CD-based games would destroy the platforms themselves.

So, it was extremely encouraging to see that the CD-I developers have used *design* principles rather than simply relying upon their technology to solve the track-jumping problem which caused the laserdisc machine problems. In *Escape From CyberCity*, the CD-I version of the old *Freedom Fighter* coin-op game, the designers placed video sequences together in a logical pattern in order to avoid the necessity of track-jumping.

Such use of the bioprocessor in the human cranium offers an encouraging sign. Oh, designers may decry the weak game play in the *ABC's Wide World of Sports* golf game on CD-I compared to that in the IBM versions of *Links* or *Jack Nicklaus' Ultimate Golf*, but some bright publisher will figure out that broadcast-quality graphics would sell even better with more challenging game play. In the meantime, the new look brings potential new consumers into the market.

The toolkit for CD-based computer entertainment has barely been tapped by the design community. Now that the machines themselves are finally reaching the market, it is time to start putting the toolkit to work in order to create more polished and challenging designs. One thing is certain, we won't be able to civilize the new frontier of CD-based entertainment by recycling old design concepts. We will need to develop the new tools and take new risks in order to refine both tools and products.

Although this editor's pet technological paradigm, "The Interactive Citizen Kane," would be prohibitively expensive (both in licensing and production costs) to develop, such a concept may illustrate the point. Who knows if a design team will ever be able to (or want to) take a classic film, create 3-D models of the characters and sets, write branching storylines, develop artificial personalities to interact with, integrate new strategic game elements (e.g., Kane's editorial decisions would impact his financial empire and personal decisions would impact his personal lifestyle; the protagonist would interview non-player characters in order to try to solve the meaning of the word, "Rosebud," or the player might compete against an artificially competitive Kane for personal, financial and political prominence) and expand the original score. Such a design would require new techniques for unfolding narrative, depicting gameplay feedback on-screen and presenting reward sequences. Yet new techniques are necessary to exploit the new technology.

The next 18-24 months will be crucial in learning to expand the toolkit for computer entertainment products. *Either* some design teams will learn to color outside the lines of past game design *or* we expect that the CD entertainment revolution will die faster than **Colecovision**. *CGW* challenges cutting edge designers to break the mold and retool the industry. We *might* become the "new Hollywood" after all. **CGW**


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Psalms 9:1-2

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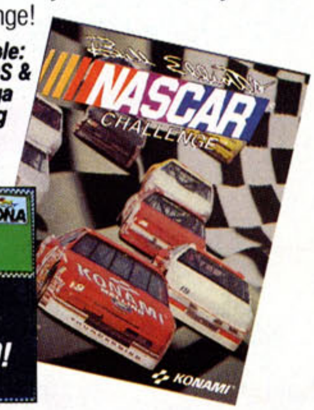
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